WORSHIPPING THE

ANCESTORS

CHINESE COMMEMORATIVE PORTRAITS

JAN STUART

EVELYN S. RAWSKI

Worshipping the Ancestors

CHINESE COMMEMORATIVE PORTRAITS

despite their compelling presence and often exquisite quality, Chinese ancestor portraits have never been studied as a genre. This richly illustrated book is the first to explore in depth the artistic, historical, and religious significance of these remarkable paintings and to place them in context with other types of commemorative portraiture.

Since the sixteenth century, portraits were commissioned in China in great number and variety. Depictions of individuals range from formal, iconic poses to the very casual and offer fascinating glimpses of Chinese life and culture. The riveting, realistic ancestor portraits—supremely powerful likenesses—were important objects of veneration, and the practice of making memorial portraits continued into the twentieth century, when paintings were gradually replaced by photographs.

Until recently, these often lavish, full-length portraits of seated men and women, which came into vogue in the late-Ming (1368–1644) and Qing dynasties (1644–1911), languished in relative obscurity, hidden from the view of non-family members and largely ignored by connoisseurs of Chinese art. Here, the authors explore the works in depth, present a fascinating study of the Qing imperial court, provide biographies of sitters from the military and social elite, and discuss the magnificent furniture and costumes that often surround the subjects. They also consider the impact of photography.

The book focuses on the superb collection of Ming and Qing portraits in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., with works

WORSHIPING THE ANCESTORS

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JAN STUART

EVELYN S. RAWSKI

Worshiping the Ancestors

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Published by the Freer Gallery of Art
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Foreword

Portraiture exerts a strong pull on the human imagination, and likenesses of people from distant lands and eras beckon to the beholder and arouse curiosity. The exceptionally large and rich collection of Chinese portraits in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, acquired within the past decade, provides a special opportunity to explore aspects of traditional Chinese society through compelling personal images. The focus of the Sackler's collection is portraits from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, with emphasis on the latter period, and many of the images portray members by birth or marriage of the Qing imperial family. These works are augmented by a portrait of a powerful, eighteenth-century emperor of the Qing dynasty in the Freer Gallery of Art, which together with the Sackler constitutes the national museum of Asian art for the United States.

The Sackler Gallery's collection is distinguished by its large number of ancestor portraits created for ritual veneration. In traditional China, it was believed that ancestors could bestow upon the living the blessings of longevity, prosperity, and progeny, and paying homage to the ancestors by placing food offerings before their portraits was a sacred family duty. The lavishness of many of the Sackler's paintings demonstrates the descendants' concern with honoring their forebears by commissioning high-quality portraits. The Sackler's collection also includes a small number of images not intended for ritual use, which, with their display of relaxed informality, are engaging in a different way. This book and the related exhibition emphasize the history of ritual portraits; by

comparing them with informal portraits and examining distinctions and overlapping traits, it is possible to articulate more clearly the special nature of ancestor portraits.

The Sackler's Chinese portraits in this book were acquired from one source—the private collection of Richard G. Pritzlaff (1902–1997), a colorful rancher from New Mexico. Pritzlaff was possessed of far-reaching vision in his passion for Chinese portraiture and stood nearly alone as one of very few people seriously interested in this genre when he was collecting in the 1930s and 1940s. He built his collection when tumultuous conditions in China led descendants of princely households to sell their treasured family possessions. In 1991, Pritzlaff generously offered his portraits to the Sackler Gallery and donated half of the appraised value of each painting. The Smithsonian's Collections Acquisition Program munificently supplied the needed funds.

The project of studying the paintings and bringing them to public view has been conceived and directed by Jan Stuart, associate curator of Chinese art, who has carried out the task with great finesse, contributing important new scholarship to the field and expertly handling the administrative details. It has been an exceptional honor for the museum to have the distinguished scholar Evelyn S. Rawski, University Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, join as coauthor and consulting co-curator of this book and exhibition. Professor Rawski is an outstanding authority on the history of late imperial China, including ritual practices and the Qing imperial family, and her contributions have been a guiding light throughout the enterprise. Dr. Rawski's participation has made this project one of the most important interdisciplinary endeavors ever sponsored by the Sackler.

It is also a pleasure to extend my gratitude to the institutional and private lenders to the exhibition. The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey; the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri; the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; the Portland Museum of Art, Maine; and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, have provided loans, and their staffs deserve our appreciation. Shirley Z. Johnson magnanimously loaned several rare and delicate Chinese textiles, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Wilmerding lent a portrait datable to 1943, which demonstrates the continuation of the ancestor portrait tradition well into the twentieth century, and Dora Wong was kind enough to temporarily part with a compelling portrait of a striding imperial guardsman from her personal collection. Appreciation for the loan of an opulent lacquer throne is owed to an anonymous lender.

A project of this large scope is indebted to help from many sources. Fidelity Investments through the Fidelity Foundation has been a beneficent sponsor, providing major funding for many aspects of the project, including conservation of the portraits. Margaret Morton and Anne-Marie Soullière of the Fidelity Foundation have been especially helpful. We also acknowledge a major grant awarded anonymously to the Freer Gallery to make possible the purchase of a rare imperial portrait. For supporting the publication of this book, we are grateful to the generosity of the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

Grants from the Smithsonian Institution have also been instrumental. The initial funding to purchase the portrait collection was provided by the Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program. Later, funds provided by the Smithsonian Collections-

Based Research Program made it possible to create a database to analyze certain statistical details in a systematic manner.

Worshipping the Ancestors is the first exhibition in the West in more than a half-century to focus on Chinese ancestor portraits, and it is both the largest and the most rigorous in elucidating the history and socioreligious importance of this category of painting. This project will bring increased attention to the subject of Chinese ritual and other types of commemorative portraits and will inspire further research and exhibitions of these captivating images. •

Acknowledgments

this book and the associated exhibition *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* are the tangible results of extensive and gratifying collaboration between the authors, a historian and an art historian, who have brought different perspectives to this rich material. On every front, we have found it rewarding to work together. We appreciate the enthusiastic endorsement given to our team approach by Milo C. Beach, director of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, and we gratefully acknowledge the support of many members of the museum's administrative staff. We wish to call special attention to the early role played by Shen C. Y. Fu, former senior curator of Chinese art at the museum, for helping in the Sackler's acquisition of the portraits.

Especially warm and deep appreciation is reserved for the late Richard G. Pritzlaff, a visionary and passionate collector without whom this project would never have been realized. Pritzlaff's heartfelt desire to share his collection with the nation motivated him to donate half of its appraised value to the Sackler Gallery. He dreamt that these portraits would someday enrich the American understanding of Chinese art and culture, and we hope that this book and exhibition would have pleased him. We dedicate our efforts to Richard Pritzlaff's memory.

Several institutions and private collectors have graciously supported the project by loans to the exhibition. We are grateful to the institutional lenders and are especially appreciative of the time and knowledge our museum colleagues shared with us. At the

Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey, both Dora C. Y. Ching and Cary Liu were colleagues extraordinaire who gave generously of their time and scholarly insights. At the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, we thank Xiaoneng Yang; at the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, Claudia Brown; and at the Portland Museum of Art, Maine, Beverly Parsons. At the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, which lent paintings and textiles, the scholar Ka Bo Tsang, curator in the Far Eastern department, patiently worked with us to share learned counsel on many matters. Klaas Ruitenbeek, chief of the department, also offered expert advice. In the textile department, thanks go to Anu Liivandi for administrative assistance.

We sincerely appreciate loans from individuals. Shirley Z. Johnson is profoundly knowledgeable about Chinese textiles and possesses an infallible eye for quality. She has been extremely helpful and also generously provided images of her objects photographed by Charles Rumph for use in the book. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Wilmerding kindly opened their home to us on several occasions and graciously let us choose a portrait from their holdings to represent the twentieth century. Dora Wong spent several days showing us her top-quality portrait collection, sharing her extensive knowledge and welcoming us as likeminded friends. Appreciation also goes to an anonymous lender.

Special credit is due Susan E. Nelson for sage advice offered after reading an early draft of the manuscript. Her comments have immeasurably improved the book, and she kindly took time to reread some passages, offering additional suggestions. Remaining errors are of course the authors' responsibility.

Once we began this project, we were pleased to learn that our interest in ancestor portraits was shared by others. The people who have assisted us are too numerous to name here, and many are acknowledged in the endnotes, but we do wish to mention some especially helpful colleagues. Susan Naquin is at the top of the list. Others in the academic community whom we wish to thank include James Cahill (who also generously provided us with originals of correspondence between himself and Pritzlaff), Jonathan Chaves, Patricia Ebrey, Robert E. Harrist, Jr., Alfreda Murck, Julia Murray, and Régine Thiriez. Two private collectors who have been most helpful are Keith Stevens and Chang Fujian. Thanks also are due to Robert Kuo for assistance in arranging meetings with dealers in Beijing who sell portraits and to Ju-shi Chou for introducing us to dealers in Hong Kong. The firms of Leung Chuan Chai and Chan Yue Kee in Hong Kong were especially kind in allowing us to examine their inventories.

Many curators not mentioned in connection with loans to the exhibition have also assisted us and shared insights. Below are the names of some of these individuals, followed by an alphabetical list of the institutions that we visited to view Chinese ancestor portraits. We hope the list will serve as a guide to others researching ancestor portraits.

Curators and curatorial assistants who deserve special mention include Susan S. Bean, Christina Behrmann, Zlata Černá, Chang Linsheng, Insoo Cho, Sun-mie Cho, Dai Liqiang, Anne Farrer, Maxwell Hearn, Hsu Kuo-huang, Robert Jacobsen, Rose Kerr, Ladislav Kesner, Jr., Hongnam Kim, Young-won Kim, Saalih Lee, Lin Po-t'ing, Liu Tian-Keh, Robert Mowry, Nie Chongzheng, Shan Guolin, Jason Sun, Ka Bo Tsang, Wang Huaqing, Verity Wilson, Tom Wu, Yang Hong, Yang Renkai, Yang Xin, and Zhi Yunting.

Institutions with Chinese ancestor portraits visited by the authors are:

The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey
The British Museum, London
The Denver Art Museum, Colorado
Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii
Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
Nanjing History Museum, Jiangsu Province
Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu Province
Náprstek Museum, Prague
Národní Gallery (National Gallery), Prague
National Palace Museum, Taipei
The Palace Museum, Beijing
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona
Qingzhou Municipal Museum, Shandong Province
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
Shanghai Museum
Shenyang Palace Museum, Liaoning Province
Taiwan Folk Arts Museum, Beitou
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

Others who have aided this project in special ways include Richard Pritzlaff's close friend the late Jerry Klinginsmith, who arranged the first meeting between Pritzlaff and the Sackler's curators. We also thank John C. Pritzlaff, Jr., the collector's nephew and the executor of his estate, who has assisted in many details along the way. In addition, the authors would like to thank Lillian Clementi and Dieter R. von Oettingen for translating research materials from German.

Some of the many Freer and Sackler staff members who have deployed their skills to enhance this project deserve immense credit. Stephen D. Allee contributed superior translations and detailed biographical research. He has an exceptional ability to decode arcane language and produce elegant translations into English. The project would have been much less successful without him.

Sinologists Tamara Bentley and Perri Strawn contributed expert organizational skills and scholarly insights. They deserve special mention for building the database of the Sackler's ancestor portraits. Audrey Grissom undertook many essential tasks with commendable efficiency and good humor. Weina Tray unstintingly assisted at every stage, expertly handling myriad administrative details.

Editor Bruce Tapper took his pen to the manuscript and polished it with a sensitive touch and eye for consistency; Jane McAllister added further improvements at a

later stage, and Rob Rudnick and Anne Holmes prepared the index. Carol Beehler applied her peerless sense of design to craft this volume, the elegance of which is testimony to her high standards and skill. We are also thankful to Karen Sagstetter, who as editor-in-chief of the publications department, oversaw the project with characteristic thoughtfulness. Photography in the book reflects the superior talents and hard work of Robert Harrell, Neil Greentree, and John Tsantes; for the fine quality prints we thank Michael Bryant.

In the conservation department, painting conservator Xiangmei Gu should be singled out for her exceptional skill, highly informed judgment, and infallible aesthetic sensibility. She restored the original luster to a great many paintings illustrated in this book. Gu supervised the excellent work of Yuanli Hou and Valerie Gouet Lee. The oversight of Paul Jett, chief of the department of scientific research and conservation, is gratefully acknowledged. For expert advice on conservation issues relating to the exhibition, we thank Jane Norman.

The handsome appearance of the exhibition reveals the careful oversight of Richard W. Franklin, with special credit to the talent of designer David Hammell; others in the design department who made special contributions include Nancé Hacskeylo, James Horrocks, and Richard Skinner.

For installation and assistance in handling these large paintings, we thank Craig (Rocky) Korr and George Rogers. Other important contributors include the museum's library staff, especially Lily Kecskes, head of the library, who ordered research materials for us and assisted in many details, and Colleen Hennesy of the archives. The education department staff headed by Ray Williams initiated innovative and informative accompanying programs; and in preparatory stages of the exhibition, Lucia B. Pierce guided our thoughts about educational themes.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the assistance of Cheryl Sobas, exhibitions coordinator, and Rebecca Gregson, associate registrar, who orchestrated many details with great expertise. Important collaborators in the development department include its head, Beverly With, along with Kirstin Mattson for making grant applications and Caroline Bedinger for arranging special events.

It is a privilege to thank the staff at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, for agreeing to present the exhibition in 2003. We appreciate the support of Dan L. Monroe, the director, and Nancy Berliner, curator of Chinese art.

Two more persons who deserve special acknowledgment are our respective spouses, who offered constant understanding and spent many hours patiently listening to the intricacies of Chinese portraiture, rewarding us with numerous valuable insights. •

J. S. and E. S. R.

Note to the Reader

In this book, Chinese terms, personal names, and place-names have been rendered in pinyin, the romanization system used by the United States Library of Congress. Exceptions are made for places and institutions in Taiwan and for individuals who have developed a personal system for rendering their names. This may puzzle those who are accustomed to the older, Wade-Giles system. For example, Qing, the name of the dynasty that ruled China from 1644 to 1911, would be spelled Ch'ing according to Wade-Giles. Readers who would wish to know the Chinese characters for terms and names are directed to the glossary at the back of this book. The glossary does not, however, include Chinese transliterations of Manchu names and terms. As is noted in the text, Manchu was one of the two state languages of the dynasty and had its own writing system. The book also follows the Chinese custom of citing an individual's surname before his or her personal name, with the exception of present-day individuals who choose to use the Western order for their names.

Throughout the text, the primary capital of the Qing dynasty is called Peking, which was the term used in contemporary accounts by foreigners and which remains familiar to English speakers. Qing government documents referred to the city by a term that in Chinese means "capital" (*jingshi*). As the city's political status shifted, its name also changed. Between 1928 and 1949, the same city was called Beiping (Northern peace) and was not the national capital, which was located at Nanjing (literally, Southern capital). When the Chinese Communist Party established the People's Republic of China in 1949, it renamed the city Beijing (literally, Northern capital) and made it the seat of the national government. In the interest of historical accuracy, the name Beijing is used here only to refer to the city after 1949.

In the caption information, the term "title slip" refers to a label that appears on the outside of a scroll painting when it is rolled up. It is the practice in this book to provide the dimensions of art objects when they are known. Height is listed before width and depth.

JAN STUART

Introduction

The need to scrutinize faces looking for signs of reassurance or danger is an instinctive survival skill that has led to a deep human fascination with faces. This may in part explain the extraordinary appeal of portraiture as one of the most universally popular and enduring genres of art. After all, encountering a striking likeness is almost like meeting the human original behind the portrait.¹ Yet despite portraiture's hold on our imagination, the discipline of Chinese art history has only recently begun to move beyond its traditional focus on landscape painting to acknowledge the significance of Chinese portraits and encourage exhibitions devoted to them.

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery is eminently positioned as a major resource for this new direction in scholarship through the acquisition of eighty-five Chinese figure paintings, most of them portraits, which range in date from the mid-fifteenth to the twentieth century. The Freer Gallery of Art, which is affiliated with the Sackler and together with it constitutes the national museum of Asian art for the United States, has also recently acquired a noteworthy portrait of an eighteenth-century Chinese emperor (see fig. 5.2). This book, which accompanies and expands upon the exhibition *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits*, explores the core of the Sackler's portrait collection as well as related works in the Freer Gallery and several private collections. The portraits are analyzed from multiple perspectives as both art and artifact with the aim of expanding the understanding of Chinese visual culture. Many of the Sackler's portraits also possess additional historical value because they likely represent members by birth or marriage of the imperial family of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

Additionally, the collection is distinguished by having examples of the same individual represented in more than one portrait image and by the inclusion of several sets of family portraits, which consist of images of a husband and wife or of several generations of sons.

The Sackler's portraits formerly belonged to the late collector Richard G. Pritzlaff, who generously helped the museum acquire them in 1991 through the mechanism of partial gift and partial sale (fig. 1). Pritzlaff donated half of the appraised value of each object, and the Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program provided the rest of the funding. Of special interest is a group of seventy formal, frontally posed images, most of which belong to a subcategory called ancestor or memorial portraits that were originally intended for ritual use in family ancestor worship. The striking likenesses of Prince Hongming and his wife, Princess Wanyan, in the Sackler's collection epitomize the tradition (figs. 2, 3). Ancestor portraits are invariably in the format of hanging scrolls and present the subjects as icons—always full-length, seated in a chair, and facing forward with an imperturbable gaze.

Pritzlaff collected ancestor portraits in the 1930s and 1940s during a period when art historians routinely trivialized Chinese portraiture. As late as 1968, Hugo Munsterberg wrote "Portraiture in the Western sense does not really exist in Chinese art, for even when real persons were represented—officials, scholars, court ladies—the artist portrayed a generalized type rather than the naturalistic likeness of the specific person."² Echoing this, a few years later Michael Sullivan claimed that Chinese portraiture "seldom [achieves] a physical likeness of the subject."³ Surprisingly, these views have not yet completely died out and continue to recur in slightly modified form.⁴

Pritzlaff was ahead of his time in his interest in portraits, and his collection demonstrates the fallacy of earlier judgments that Chinese portraits are all stereotypes. While artists operated within culturally determined conventions and blended realism and idealization in mixed degrees, depending upon the intended function and audience for a portrait, the results nonetheless were generally images of recognizable, individual persons. In the case of ancestor portraits, verism was especially significant and was only compromised in a limited number of situations (discussed in chapter 4).

In the past, Chinese portraits viewed outside of China have often been unconsciously judged by standards developed for Western works created after the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century, European artists began to transform the portrait from a record of appearance into a character study, and portraiture came to be valued as a bona fide art only if it succeeded in being a picture of the mind and soul. Recent Western analysis has focused even more on the interactive nature of portraits, understanding them to be the result of an active dialogue between the sitter and the artist, with additional participation in the form of interchange between the viewer and the portrait image. Painters take part in a process of constructing an identity for the sitter—teasing out and recording the subject's unique thoughts, emotions, and character, while doing so under the influence of contemporary social notions about self and fabrication of identity. This approach to understanding portraiture is appropriate for assessing some types of Chinese portraits but seems somewhat misguided for appreciating Chinese ancestor portraits. Only by studying them in their specific cultural setting do Chinese memorial portraits and their distinctive style become fully intelligible.

The paintings Pritzlaff collected also include a small number of engaging, informal portraits that illuminate issues of constructing and projecting personal identity in late imperial China. In comparison with ancestor portraits, these likenesses are more expressive and reveal greater artistic freedom, but they too were governed by social expectations and conventions. A few of the Sackler's informal portraits also highlight a trend that was becoming common in the eighteenth century to adopt some of the imagery of ritual portraits.

The above issues are considered in the following chapters of *Worshiping the Ancestors* after an account here of Richard Pritzlaff's collection, how Pritzlaff originally acquired it, how it came to the Sackler Gallery, and its eventual conservation at the Sackler. This introduction concludes with an assessment of the rarity of the collection. Chapter 1, "Portraiture and Ancestor Rituals," investigates the use and history of Chinese ancestor portraits, examining the ancestor cult up through the Qing dynasty. Influences of Buddhism and Confucianism as well as the role of the imperial ancestor cult on changes in ritual practice are also discussed.

Chapter 2, "Visual Conventions," explores the standard formula for an ancestor portrait and identifies customary variations, as well as comparing ancestor likenesses to other types of portraiture. "Realism and the Iconic Pose," chapter 3, places the stylistic evolution of ancestor portraits in the wider perspective of Chinese attitudes toward realism and then looks at Chinese and Western concepts about the iconic pose. Standard Chinese terms for ancestor portraits and the methods used to produce them are investigated in chapter 4, "Nomenclature, Production, and Documentary Value."

Portrait of Lady Wanyan,
 wife of Hongming (1705–1767)
 Qing dynasty, 1767, or later copy
 Inscribed on silk strips attached to the
 mounting, in Chinese and Manchu (see
 below): On the nineteenth day in the fourth
 lunar month of the *dinghai* year in the
 sexagenary cycle [May 16, 1767], offered by
 the filial son Yongzhong [1688–1755]
 Title slip in Chinese: Portrait of Princess
 Wanyan, principal wife of the Gong Qin
 prince of the august Qing dynasty
 Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
 image only, 199.0 x 115.2 cm
 Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian
 Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
 Collections Acquisition Program and partial
 gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.53

This likeness of Lady Wanyan and that of
 her husband (see fig. 3) were created as a
 matching pair, which is an ideal standard for
 memorial portraits. Except for the gender-
 related differences in the clothing, all the
 appurtenances are identical.

Wanyan's costume is very elaborate, and
 although it is not full court dress, she wears
 jewelry appropriate for the most formal
 attire (see chapter 5). Her coronet is
 decorated with five gold-and-pearl-phoenix
 ornaments, which signify high rank. The
 touches of brilliant blue on the hat
 reproduce the effect of ornaments decorated
 with kingfisher feathers, which because of
 the intense luminosity of their color were
 often used for jewelry in the Qing dynasty
 (1644–1911).

Inscriptions in Chinese (right) and Manchu
 (left) that appear on the mounting in the
 lower corners of the scroll.

Here analysis of Chinese terms for ancestor portraits points to the fact that many were painted posthumously in workshop settings. Also considered are problems encountered in trying to establish a firm chronological sequence for dating ancestor portraits, including the common practice of producing copies. The chapter concludes by assessing

3

Portrait of Prince Hongming (1705–1767)

Qing dynasty, 1767, or later copy

Inscribed in Chinese and Manchu:

the same as for figure 2

Title slip in Chinese: Portrait of the Gong Qin

prince of the august Qing dynasty

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 200.8 x 115.4 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian

Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian

Collections Acquisition Program and partial

gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.61

This portrait and the one of Hongming's wife (see fig. 2) bear inscriptions dated to 1767, but the text is not written directly on the paintings and cannot be given too much weight. These paintings could be copies of eighteenth-century portraits, and based on some stylistic features, a date in the second half of the nineteenth century seems highly plausible. However, it is not impossible that skilled court artists who had fully mastered the newly introduced nuances of Western-style portraiture executed these works in 1767. See chapter 7 for more about dating.

Hongming wears semiformal court dress appropriate for winter. His front-split robe, or *jifu* (semiformal court attire), is worn beneath a surcoat with a round dragon badge that announces his rank as a prince. The side vents on the coat part to reveal drawstring pouches and a white scarf suspended from his belt on both the right and left. These are typical male costume accessories.

the value of ancestor portraits for studies of material culture. Toward this end, a database on three hundred ancestor portraits in public and private collections around the world has been compiled. The Chinese painters' preoccupation with detailed description in ancestor portraits has tempted many modern viewers automatically to trust them

as reliable documents of material culture, when actually the images are far more complicated than they appear.

That many of the Sackler's portraits portray members of the imperial family makes it important to understand the social milieu of the Qing court, which is the topic of chapter 5, "Portraits at the Qing Court." Social hierarchies within the imperial lineage, the banner nobility, and the civil bureaucracy are described. Chinese cultural responses to issues of identity and names are discussed in chapter 6, "The Identity of the Sitters," which also includes brief biographies of significant people portrayed in the portraits along with translations of their accompanying encomiums and inscriptions.

The final chapter, "Innovation within Tradition," addresses the impact of photography and the history of ancestor portraits in the twentieth century. The discovery of a number of fake and altered ancestor portraits intended for the Western art market is also addressed to help establish criteria for assessing the authenticity of Chinese ancestor portraits in Western collections.

Appendix 1 is a photographic supplement that includes illustrations of most of the portraits from Pritzlaff's collection that are now in the Sackler and are not otherwise represented in *Worshipping the Ancestors*. Appendix 2 provides additional biographical information about the sitters treated in this book along with translations of encomiums.

The Sackler Gallery's Acquisition of the Collection

The story of the Sackler's portraits is a testament to the extraordinary fate and unanticipated audiences sometimes encountered by portable works of art. Many of these portraits followed a trajectory from family altars in imperial China, via an antique dealer active in Peking in the 1930s and 1940s, to the United States. There they initially arrived at Pritzlaff's picturesque ranch in Sapello, New Mexico, outside of Santa Fe. Over four decades later they briefly were in the possession of one-time presidential contender Ross Perot in Dallas, Texas, before being returned to New Mexico and then eventually reaching the Sackler. The final stage of that journey began on an autumn day in 1989, when Richard G. Pritzlaff, who was then unknown to anyone at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, telephoned the museum to offer his collection of Chinese portraits. At the time, he alleged that their display would "forever change American opinion of Chinese art."⁵

An irascible eighty-seven year old, Pritzlaff was argumentative in his initial call. Past experience, he said, had taught him that art historians and curators were a "superficial and disappointing lot," incapable of recognizing the value of his paintings, which lay outside the traditional canon of Chinese art. Softening a bit, Pritzlaff conceded that it might sound unlikely that a rancher who had lived since 1935 in the rural town of Sapello would possess a pathbreaking collection of Chinese paintings.⁶ He explained that his acquisition of more than one hundred paintings and other objects had begun with a chance encounter in 1937 in Peking with Wu Lai-hsi (died circa 1949). Wu was a well-known collector and dealer who had supplied the antique trade in China and London during the early twentieth century with a steady stream of palace-quality

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Detail, palace hanging of dragons cavorting among lotus flowers over mountains and waves

Qing dynasty, 1st half 18th century

Embroidery; silk and metallic threads on silk; 209 x 216 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.142

goods procured from impecunious Chinese nobles.

Pritzlaff's impassioned claim about the portraits seemed grandiose, but he was correct that art historians had long privileged Chinese landscape painting almost to the total exclusion of portraits. Pritzlaff sent photographs to the Sackler that supported his claim that his collection was unlike any other private or institutional holding in the United States. Impressed by their dazzling appeal and potential historical value, this author traveled with another curator, Shen C. Y. Fu, to Sapello to examine the portraits, and we agreed that the Sackler should try to acquire them.

Pritzlaff's offer to the Sackler included all of his Chinese art, except for the furniture, objets d'art, and paintings on display in his house.⁷ According to the conditions of his will, these were to be sold after his death and the proceeds used to benefit the Nature Conservancy, to which he bequeathed his ranch.⁸ Along with the portraits that came to the Sackler, a fascinating painting depicting a Daoist court ceremony was also acquired, as were, at Pritzlaff's insistence, some minor scrolls.⁹ These included a hanging scroll, *Peaches of Longevity*, attributed to the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908), and a

late-Ming dynasty scroll of peacocks, one of Pritzlaff's favorite subjects because he raised them on his ranch. The Sackler also acquired a few Chinese textiles, including an early-eighteenth-century palace hanging of dragons (fig. 4). Pritzlaff said that the exceptional quality of this embroidery helped him imagine the resplendent dragon robes worn by the sitters in his collection of portraits.

Richard Pritzlaff and the Story of the Collection

In the late 1970s, Richard Pritzlaff started to fret about the safety of his portrait collection, most of which he stored at his ranch (a smaller number of paintings and objects was kept in a safe-deposit vault in Santa Fe). He suspected vandals of pilfering his house.¹⁰ The telephone call to the Sackler in 1989 was a last hope to find a way to protect his collection and realize a long-held dream of bringing it to public view.¹¹ In the period from the 1940s until the late 1980s, Pritzlaff had contacted several museums and scholars with offers to lend or sell the portraits. Beginning in 1944 he lent eight portraits and some textiles to the Denver Art Museum and followed up with additional loans over the next few decades.¹²

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Pritzlaff invited the distinguished Chinese art experts Laurence Sickman, Alan Priest, and Schuyler Cammann to the ranch to review his collection.¹³ He also began a lengthy correspondence about the portraits with several prominent professors, including the art historian James Cahill and the historian Jonathan Spence, which Pritzlaff kept up for years. Yet because of his cantankerous nature (and he became more irritable as he aged), plus his proclivity to berate scholars for their ignorance about portraiture, many early attempts to place the paintings in a museum failed. Combined with low academic interest in Chinese portraiture before about 1990, the collection was condemned to relative obscurity until it came to the Sackler.

Pritzlaff's passion for Chinese art was rooted in the wanderlust that took him to China. He had studied landscape architecture at the University of California at Berkeley in the late 1920s before continuing at Harvard, and he said it was fond memories of the San Francisco and Berkeley Chinatowns that prompted him to travel to China, where he found his avocation as a collector of Chinese art.¹⁴

In Peking in 1937, Pritzlaff purchased enough objects to fill more than thirty crates.¹⁵ The first two portraits he remembered acquiring depict a Qing court official allegedly named Ser Er Chen (unidentified) and his wife (see appendix 1 figs. 5, 6).¹⁶ His early purchases in China also included furniture and a coromandel screen, as well as jades, textiles, gilt bronze vessels, and earthenware figures of horses. Pritzlaff once said he prized most a suit of armor he brought back that was reputed to have belonged to the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722). He placed it on long-term loan in the Denver Art Museum.¹⁷

Pritzlaff's infatuation with portraits developed gradually, shaped in part by studying the first ones he brought back from China, and also by serendipity when Wu Lai-hsi later sent him more portraits unannounced. Pritzlaff admired what he called the unsurpassed dignity and grandeur of the sitters and praised the Chinese artists' skills as "almost impossible to achieve."¹⁸ Eager to discover how the painters created an effect of

vitality for the portraits' subjects despite the sitters' rigidly static poses, Pritzlaff scrutinized the paintings, recognizing the importance of the palette. He observed that most of the eighteenth-century portraits had been painted in complementary shades of blue for the costumes, and that by "holding a hand over one of the blues or the red destroys the dynamic quality of the whole."¹⁹

The major catalyst in sparking Pritzlaff's passionate interest in portraits, however, was, ironically, an unsolicited shipment from Wu Lai-hsi in the early 1940s. Wu's role in shaping the portrait collection should not be underestimated.²⁰ Of Fujianese descent, Wu had family connections in England, where according to Pritzlaff he had also been educated. As an adult, Wu lived in Peking and London, building a reputation in both cities as a top-notch dealer of imperial Chinese porcelains and objects. Sir Percival and Lady David, who founded the Percival David Foundation at the University of London in 1952, were among his clients.²¹ An auction catalogue from Sotheby's, London, dated May 26, 1937, lists a staggering 110 lots of imperial porcelain for sale, most of which are Chenghua (1465–87) mark and period, all belonging to Wu and attesting to his extensive contacts with Chinese nobility. Two of the cups were noted in the catalogue as having been "crazed by the Fire in the Imperial Palace of Peking in 1923."²²

Wu Lai-hsi apparently died around 1949–50, toothless, in his late eighties or early nineties. He was highly admired by museum professionals, including the late Archibald Brankston of the British Museum and the late Laurence Sickman, director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. The esteemed porcelain expert Geng Baochang of the Palace Museum, Beijing, and the prominent collector and dealer Charlotte Horstman remember visiting Wu's house when they were young to examine flawless antiques and learn from him how to identify the excellent fakes entering the market.²³

Some of the sources from which Wu Lai-hsi procured imperial porcelains may have been the same as for the portrait paintings.²⁴ Although he was not an expert in paintings and did not sell them often, his judgments about the portraits he sold Pritzlaff were generally sound. Among the exceptions are paintings falsely attributed to the famous Italian Jesuit artist Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining; 1688–1766), who was active at the Chinese court.²⁵ Several of Pritzlaff's portraits reveal Western stylistic influences associated with the school of Castiglione, but none is from his brush.²⁶

Pritzlaff believed that one of his favorite paintings, a long handscroll with a spurious signature of Castiglione, was genuine (fig. 5). Despite Wu Lai-hsi's claim that *European Ladies on Horseback* was one of the "greatest treasures" of the art-loving Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–96), the scroll is likely the work of an early twentieth-century forger.²⁷ This painting notwithstanding, Wu's misattributions were relatively few and typical of the mistakes made during the early twentieth century.

Pritzlaff himself, not understanding that some Western influences in painting were already widely disseminated in China by the second half of the eighteenth century, also falsely attributed several portraits in his collection to Castiglione. Among them is a portrait of a woman holding an orchid, her face modeled in a Western fashion with opaque, heavy coloring (see fig. 4.2). He compounded his error when he judged an almost identical portrait in his collection to be a copy of Castiglione's work by an anony-

mous Chinese artist (fig. 6).²⁸ Pritzlaff based his case for a Chinese attribution for figure 6 on the subtle coloring and lack of shading for the face, which is a traditional Chinese approach. In fact, both paintings are by Chinese artists. The more understated of the two is the earlier version, a fine work probably dating to the Yongzheng period (1723–35).

Wu Lai-hsi purchased portraits in China for his personal collection and for resale. He was initially attracted to them because of his interest in the evolution of the dragon motif, which is a pervasive decoration on the sitters' clothing. In traditional China, the notion of possessing an image of someone else's ancestor was anathema, almost to the point of being sacrilegious, so Wu's collecting habits distinguished him as "modern." He was proud of his position in the vanguard of collecting in this field, and he once took umbrage with the curator Alan Priest, who stated in 1942 that Bertha Lumm, the source of Chinese portraits in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, was the first to recognize the importance of ancestor images. Wu insisted that he had been the first collector of this material.²⁹

In the early 1940s, Wu Lai-hsi unexpectedly wrote to Pritzlaff from Peking asking if he could send him portraits in exchange for money to survive. Wu was worried about his own financial security as well as the fate of the portraits in China, where war with Japan and domestic turmoil threatened the security of private art collections. Wu sent three shipments of portraits to New Mexico, the last of which arrived in 1948. He intended for Pritzlaff to sell most of the paintings, but Pritzlaff did not want to disperse the collection. Instead, he sent Wu as much money as he could. Pritzlaff said he thought of himself as the owner of some paintings but wanted to be only a temporary custodian of others, and he hoped that Wu would someday reclaim a group of portraits for display in China. After Wu died, his son, whom Pritzlaff contacted in Taiwan, declined any claim or interest in the collection, leaving Pritzlaff to accept that the ultimate fate of the portraits was his responsibility alone.³⁰

Pritzlaff's knowledge of his paintings was solid, if imperfect. In early notes, he appraised them as being "interesting as history, psychology and personalities."³¹ He took

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Detail, *European Ladies on Horseback*, with
spurious signature of Giuseppe Castiglione
(Lang Shining; 1688–1766)
Republic period, ca. 1920s–30s
Handscroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 52.5 x 2669.5 cm
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
Collections Acquisition Program and partial
gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.46

Beauty Standing near a Pot of Orchids
Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period
(1723–35)

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 121.3 x 67.2 cm
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
Collections Acquisition Program and
partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff,
s1991.49

This portrait, like the related composition in figure 4.2, allegedly depicts Lady Liu, an imperial concubine of the Yongzheng emperor, but the identification is unlikely to be correct. Paintings of beautiful women of this type were popular at the Qing court and in male society in general. While seemingly sedate by modern standards, the imagery would have been considered mildly erotic at the time it was painted.

special delight in the noble lineage of many sitters and fantasized that each portrait had been painted at the personal command of the emperor. He also convinced himself that the sitters' robes had been personally presented to them by the emperor, whereas it was the typical practice for Chinese nobles to procure their own court robes at personal expense.³² Belief in the imperial connections of ancestor paintings is a common fiction among Westerners who own Chinese portraits, but at least in Pritzlaff's case, even if he exaggerated, he did own portraits of people who served at high levels in the Qing court.

When he first acquired the collection, Pritzlaff wrote that the "painting varies a great deal—from the excellence of Mang Kuli [Mangguri; 1672–1736; see fig. 2.13] and [other] court painters, including several Castigianes [*sic*] and Attirets, to some poor Tung oil hideous portraits" (see figs. 7.4, 7.5). He continued, "But since the portraits are roughly 1650 to almost 1900 the variety would make them more authentic in my opinion. Some are definite copies, like when Dorgan[']s [1611–1650] rank was restored by Chien Lung [the Qianlong emperor]" (see appendix 1 fig. 31).³³

In some regards, Pritzlaff's evaluation was too modest. The collection is more comprehensive in date than he believed and includes a portrait painted two centuries earlier than he had estimated as well as several ancestor portraits from around 1900 and slightly later. The oil portraits that Pritzlaff disparaged possess historical significance as documents of the widespread infiltration of Western styles and techniques embraced in Chinese nineteenth-century portraiture.

Pritzlaff gleaned all he could from Wu Lai-hsi about the identity of the sitters. Though sellers often removed inscriptions from portraits, Wu tried to ascertain the identity of each sitter and would pass on the information. Pritzlaff sometimes recorded the person's name on a blank title slip, a label affixed to the outside of a portrait. When possible, he also checked the sitter's biography in the reference book *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* by Arthur W. Hummel. If no biography existed, Pritzlaff took notes from Wu, who according to Pritzlaff was translating an "original history of the Ching [Qing] dynasty."³⁴ Pritzlaff had promised to give his copious files and correspondence with Wu to the Sackler, but only a few biographical notes arrived with the scrolls. The executors of the estate never found the missing papers.

Bringing the Collection to the Public

Once Pritzlaff decided to bring his collection to public notice, with typical hyperbole he asserted that the paintings could be used to "improve the relationship" between the United States and China.³⁵ He petitioned the Coca Cola Corporation to sponsor a documentary film about China using his collection of portraits as a historical backdrop.³⁶ Receiving no answer, he more modestly conceived of a scheme to have the publisher of Hummel's biographical dictionary reissue an illustrated edition with his portraits.³⁷ This idea, without any offer of funding, also failed.

Pritzlaff's most successful gesture to make the collection known was through his loans to the Denver Art Museum. Then in 1970, Robert Moes, curator of Oriental Art, wrote to Pritzlaff to ask if he would consider converting the loans to an unrestricted

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Conservators remove the backing paper from one of the Sackler's portraits in preparation for remounting the painting.

gift. Moes informed Pritzlaff that the museum would like to retain two of the finest scrolls and sell the others to generate income to acquire other types of art.³⁸

Disillusioned, Pritzlaff decided to keep the collection, which led to an unexpected—though ultimately temporary—resolution to its care. In the mid-1980s, Texas magnate Ross Perot visited Pritzlaff's ranch with friends to inspect the horses and was mesmerized by the Chinese portraits. After a second visit, Perot agreed to buy paintings, robes, and textiles from Pritzlaff and expressed interest in building a museum to house the collection.

After the collection was ensconced in Dallas, Perot invited the art expert James Cahill to evaluate it in July 1986. Cahill informed him that the artistic quality of the paintings ranged from excellent to mediocre and that some were forgeries—notably *European Ladies on Horseback* (see fig. 5). He recommended that Perot sponsor a visit from Nie Chongzheng, a specialist in court painting and portraits who is now curator emeritus at the Palace Museum, Beijing, to evaluate the collection.³⁹ Perot concluded that building a new museum dedicated solely to this collection was not merited, but he was keen on inviting Nie to study the collection. Just as the Chinese scholar was preparing to come to the United States, Cahill received startling news that aborted Nie's trip.

Nancy P. Mulford, Perot's daughter, wrote to Cahill, "Truth is often stranger than fiction and I think that theory definitely applies to the events surrounding my father's collection of Chinese art."⁴⁰ In the summer of 1987, when Pritzlaff realized that Perot would not build a museum, he became irate and bought back the collection.⁴¹ Pritzlaff felt a moral imperative to bring the "fine clear colors, excellent brushwork and history" of the collection to public view, an aim he finally achieved after contacting the Sackler Gallery.⁴²

Curators at the Ranch

When Pritzlaff sent photographs of the collection to the Sackler Gallery, he included a note worded as sternly as a drill sergeant's orders. He warned the curators that they must come to the ranch "very soon or your gallery does not deserve to exhibit these works." Quixotically, he also included an oversized photograph of Georgia O'Keeffe visiting his ranch as assurance that the scenery alone would make the journey worthwhile.

In 1990, Shen C. Y. Fu, former senior curator of Chinese art at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, accompanied this author to Sapello. Within moments of arriving, we were escorted on a walking tour of the ranch that began with a mishap. As we passed a stray cat nursing her litter, Pritzlaff's chow dog seized a kitten in his jaws. Instinctively, I tried to save the kitten and now wear a small scar on my forearm as a souvenir of a curator's adventures in the quest for art. Yet Pritzlaff accosted me with a look implying I should have known better, then shocked us by reprimanding the dog, addressing him "Mr. Fu." Suspecting an insidious slur, Shen Fu wondered why Pritzlaff was addressing the dog with his name, unaware that it was pure coincidence. Pritzlaff's dog had been named in honor of his resemblance to the "foo (or fu) dog" sculptures that guard Chinese Buddhist temples. Although the sculptures represent lions, their

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Portrait of Prince Hongming before water stains were removed and the scroll was remounted (see fig. 3 for post-restoration).

canine features have led generations of Westerners to dub the animals “foo dogs” (“foo” is a transcription of the Chinese word for Buddhist).

Other awkward incidents also threatened to terminate our visit abruptly. We inadvertently insulted our host by not finishing the lunch he served of boiled ground beef, boiled potatoes, and boiled coffee (made without a filter). When dinnertime arrived, after a tiring session of rolling and unrolling the large portraits, Pritzlaff dryly informed us that people who waste food do not deserve dinner. The nearest restaurant was not only forty miles away, he chortled, but it was also closed. After a few minutes, he relented and fed us with sliced bread and garden-grown tomatoes, and his good humor returned when he realized we genuinely appreciated the portraits.

Pritzlaff’s home was a strikingly elegant adobe house that he had designed himself, but it was compromised by a heavy mantle of age, including holes in the roof that had admitted a colony of flies. All of the windows opened to scenic vistas, including glimpses of Pritzlaff’s horses and the peafowl he fed on the veranda. He refused to block any views with shutters or curtains. Where the harsh sunlight needed filtering in front of a picture window, he had dug a pit in the floor and planted a row of scrub pines inside the house.

The main décor featured Chinese furniture, portraits, and figure paintings, some of which were exceptionally large horizontal compositions of hunting parties and gatherings in gardens. Pritzlaff’s method of displaying his Chinese paintings preserved the original scroll mountings. He hung the scrolls inside shallow niches he had hollowed into the adobe walls, and then he covered the niches with glass. The paintings not on view in his house—the ones that came to the Sackler—were kept tightly rolled and in storage.

Pritzlaff also hung a few paintings by the same method on the veranda, constructing niches in the house’s outer walls under the overhang of the roof. When dining alfresco, he said he imagined that the peacocks fanned their tails in competition with the sartorial splendor of the Manchu nobles in the portraits.

After meeting the Sackler’s curators, Pritzlaff was convinced he had found the right public home for the portraits, but before he finalized the transfer of the collection to the Sackler he had one brief change of heart. He said he had lived most of his adult life in the company of these Chinese ancestors and would feel lonely without them. Yet, on second thought, he knew he wanted to share them with a museum audience.

Conservation of the Collection at the Sackler

With the exception of the risky experiment of hanging a few paintings outdoors, Pritzlaff was exceedingly careful about their care. Many portraits, however, sustained damage in China from use and periods of neglect, including damp storage conditions. A campaign at the Sackler to conserve the collection has improved the condition of more than thirty paintings so far. The conservation has also provided significant insights into the painting techniques used by the artists, which is discussed in chapter 4.

Routine procedures carried out by the Freer and Sackler’s East Asian Painting Conservation Studio included repairing minor creases and removing a thick film of

grime and incense smoke from the surface of many paintings to restore their original sheen. A suction table was often employed, while in other cases, after the colorfastness of the pigments had been evaluated, mechanical cleaning with damp cotton swabs was effective in removing dirt.

For some paintings, more radical treatment was necessary to stabilize flaking pigments, mend serious cracks, remove or lighten water stains, and replace torn mounting-silks. The most fragile portraits had to be completely remounted, which first entailed removing the silk mounting strips, or “frame,” around the painting; and next separating the painting itself from its backing of several layers of paper. The laborious process required moistening the painting and gently peeling off the backing paper (fig. 7). Subsequently the artwork was cleaned and a new backing affixed. As a final step, a silk frame, including a hanging rod at the top and a roller at the bottom, was added. The whole process took several months for each painting, including long periods for drying on a flat board. An illustration of *Portrait of Prince Hongming* before remounting (fig. 8) compared with the painting after treatment (see fig. 3) demonstrates the dramatic results achieved by the museum’s conservation specialists.

Several of the Sackler’s portraits seem to have original silk mountings, while others were remounted, perhaps in the 1920s or 1930s.⁴³ The older mountings are unusually luxurious both in the choice of fabrics and the number of decorative flourishes employed. For example, *fengdai* (wind strips), ornamental strips of silk pasted above a painting on the mounting, are encountered less often on landscape scrolls mounted in the Qing dynasty than on ancestor likenesses (see fig. 6.4). That is because for landscapes, Chinese collectors wanted to follow an understated taste, but for ancestor images, splendiferous mountings added to their solemn majesty.

During the remounting of some scrolls at the Sackler, the specialists discovered that in several cases the silk mounting strips surrounding a portrait had already been recycled, which is unusual. The efforts by earlier mounting specialists to preserve these textiles reflect on their exceptional lavishness, which in some cases equals that of the silks used in the imperial workshops. At the Sackler, whenever possible, the mounting fabrics were cleaned and reused, but if necessary, new ones with designs and colors similar to the old were utilized.⁴⁴ Many of the modern scroll mountings are intentionally elaborate, combining silks of several different colors and patterns in a single work to reproduce the effect of the original fabrics.

The portraits with older mountings in the Sackler’s collection tend to be longer than those remounted in the early twentieth century. Some paintings may have been modified in China for sale to Westerners, whose homes had lower ceilings than an imposing Chinese family temple or mansion. One exceptionally short hanging scroll came with a notation to this effect by Pritzlaff, who wrote that it had been cut out of its original mounting and put in a shorter one.⁴⁵ Another explanation for the truncated length of some scrolls is the removal of a part of the original mounting, called a *shitang* (poetry hall), which is a separate sheet of blank paper or silk mounted directly above a painting in the hanging-scroll format. It serves as an area for inscriptions. Ancestor portraits were often but not always inscribed with the sitters’ names and birth and death dates, and a *shitang* was ideal for writing the information. Unfortunately, sellers

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Portrait of an Unidentified Woman

Ming style; 17th century

Panel-mounted hanging scroll; ink and color

on silk; image only, 129.5 x 75.0 cm

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; gift of Charles Lang Freer, 1916.186

Originally this portrait would have been one of a pair, hung to the left of a portrait of her husband. His portrait would have been painted with mirror symmetry; for example, the table would have appeared to the sitter’s left side. When only one portrait is viewed, the table seems awkward, almost as if it has been cut in half. But when two portraits hang side by side, the tables balance each other and visually complete the image. Viewers should keep in mind that ancestor portraits were usually created in pairs.

embarrassed by disposing of family portraits may have had the scrolls remounted with blank *shitang* or none at all.⁴⁶

The Context of the Pritzlaff Collection

Richard Pritzlaff was actively acquiring portraits during a period when grand images were available in unprecedented numbers owing to China's economic plight and shifting cultural values, but he stood out as one of very few collectors serious about Chinese portraits. Since the nineteenth century, many Europeans and Americans have been attracted by the lavish costumes and dignified gravity of ancestor portraits and have used them as decorative accents, but interest has stopped there. Few foreigners have understood their original ritual function.⁴⁷

After a period of relative disinterest in ancestor portraits between the 1950s and the 1990s, Chinese portraits are once again exerting a pull over Western imagination and carry cachet as fashionable decorations. The *New York Times* "House and Home Section" of October 28, 1999, illustrated what was described as a "chic residence" with a frontal, bust-length portrait of a Chinese court lady hanging on the wall. Without authorization from the Sackler, a California company in 1999 silk-screened photographs of some of the museum's ancestor portraits onto sofa pillows for sale as stylish home décor.⁴⁸ That same year, the Neiman Marcus department store offered a novel twist on the tradition of ancestor portraits by selling hand-painted chairs that resemble the figure of a seated mandarin. The outline of the chair reproduces the man's body, with his upper torso as the back splat. Even the characteristic gesture of one arm bent at chest level is replicated, as is the capelet that mandarins wore over their shoulders with official dress. The mandarin's lap becomes the chair seat, and a panel connecting the chair's front legs resembles the skirt of a Chinese court robe, with two shoes peeking out beneath the hem. Customers were invited to personalize their orders by having a portrait of a pet inserted for the mandarin's face.⁴⁹

Outside of China, relatively few people know enough about the history of ancestor portraits for it to occur to question the propriety of hanging them as decorations in a hotel lobby or home dining room. A note in Austin Coates's charming memoir *Myself a Mandarin* captures the foreigner's incomprehension. In 1950, when Coates arrived in British Hong Kong as a colonial officer, one of his first tasks was decorating his house. He searched in antique shops until he found just what he wanted:

Two sensitively painted scroll portraits: one of a Manchu official of the last century, wearing his mandarin robes; the other of his wife, wearing a magnificent costume, which I took to be that of a bride. I hung them in my room, to which they gave an atmosphere of sober dignity, fitting to the old fashioned house with high ceilings.

The portraits had been hanging there for three months before . . . I found out . . . they were posthumous portraits, commissioned by relatives of the deceased, and intended to be hung on one day only: the annual feast for the dead, to which none but family members are invited. With embarrassment I recalled the numerous

Chinese friends whom I had entertained at home, realizing for the first time the macabre impression my room must have given them.⁵⁰

Though ancestor portraits are not necessarily aired only on the “feast for the dead,” Coates was correct about their ritual importance, which precluded use as casual wall décor. However, customs in China have significantly changed since the 1950s. Today Chinese museums and private Chinese collectors display ancestor portraits without fear of causing offense.

Before the 1990s most museums, both inside and outside of China, had been unenthusiastic about displaying ancestor portraits.⁵¹ In China the religious associations of formal, iconic portraits led those trained to study art to ignore them. Their low status as anonymous paintings by professional artisans was another reason that museums worldwide have generally given ancestor portraits short shrift. A few examples discussed below suggest the parameters of collections in the West and China, and indicate that despite their previously low favor, some important collections of ancestor portraits have been assembled.

Among museums in the West the Freer Gallery of Art, which was founded in 1923 by the industrialist Charles Lang Freer, stands out as an exception for having so few traditional ancestor portraits. Among the nearly one thousand Chinese paintings that Freer donated to the gallery, only one seventeenth-century Ming-style painting of a woman is an ancestor likeness (fig. 9). Freer only bought it because he believed a spurious claim that the painting depicts a famous lady painted by the artist Yan Liben (ca. 600–674).

Most Western institutions have a larger sampling of ancestor portraits than the Freer does, but few have published or drawn attention to the paintings. For example, few people know that the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond and the Art Museum, Princeton University, each possess more than thirty ancestor portraits. The collection in Virginia is especially surprising since the museum has almost no other Chinese paintings. The portraits mostly entered the museum as donations from local patrons, who, especially during the 1940s and 1950s, were willing to part with them as they temporarily lost favor as home decorations. A few of the Virginia portraits are as splendid as the princely portraits that Pritzlaff acquired, but as is true of most portrait collections, the selection includes many examples of low artistic merit.

Two collections that deserve mention for their size and breadth are a collection in the Czech Republic and one in Canada. The National Gallery (the Národní) and the Náprstek Museum, which are affiliated institutions in Prague, possess more than forty ancestor portraits. While many of these are impressive, a large number were collected for the Náprstek by an early-twentieth-century ethnographer whose interest was in documenting Chinese social customs, not art. The Prague collections are the subject of one of the first scholarly studies of ancestor portraits, which was written by Ladislav Kesner, Jr.⁵²

Another collection that should be studied in tandem with the Sackler’s, and which includes portraits from some of the same workshops (see chapter 4), is found in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The fur trader George Crofts formed the collection in

Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor in Court Dress (r. 1736–96)
 Qing dynasty, 18th century
 Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
 image only, approx. 250 x 150 cm
 The Palace Museum, Beijing,
 People's Republic of China
 Photograph from The Palace Museum,
 Beijing

the late teens and early 1920s and recorded that he bought many of the portraits from China's princely households. In 1920 he noted that "this will probably be the last of the Ancestral Portraits because we can no longer purchase cheaply. . . . Also, the portraits are more scarce and are in demand by certain foreign buyers."⁵³

The best-known portrait collections in China consist of images of emperors and empresses. The National Palace Museum in Taipei houses most of the portraits of rulers prior to the Qing dynasty, while the Palace Museum in Beijing possesses images of the Qing emperors and their wives. Not all imperial portraits were created for use in ances-

tral rites, but all formal palace portraits employ the same stiff visual conventions common to ancestor portraits (see chapter 3). Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the conventions of palace portraiture operative in the Qing dynasty, and at the same time the dramatically different treatment of the two visages indicates a range of styles used—from Western-influenced realism to masklike impersonality. The same diversity exists in ancestor portraits created outside of the court.

Ancestor portraits have recently become of increasing interest to Chinese scholars. The Palace Museum, Beijing, has expanded its collection to include some nonimperial ancestor portraits acquired through gift and purchase. Many local Chinese museums also acquired portraits from private sources during or soon after the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Occasionally a local museum might receive a family archive, which is useful for documenting the creation of family ancestor portraits in sets. One illustrious ancestor's likeness might be used as a model for later generations, whose portraits would feature the same setting and appurtenances but have their own individualized faces. When hung together above the family altar, a set created a unified display as a reinforcement of solidarity and kinship.⁵⁴

Collections of ancestor portraits in China are mostly unpublished and have only recently begun to be placed on public display.⁵⁵ Examples of the new trend to display portraits include two exhibitions, in 1995 and 1998 respectively, at the Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, and at the National Taiwan Arts Education Institute in Taipei.⁵⁶

Another sign of shifting perceptions about whether ancestor portraits are ritual objects or works of art is evinced by the small but growing number of Chinese collectors around the world who are building private collections of memorial portraits.⁵⁷ Currently, dealers in Hong Kong and Beijing have a stock of portraits for sale, the majority of which are charming nineteenth-century likenesses of commoners and low-level officials, or large group portraits from Shanxi province (see chapter 2). Genuine portraits of high-level officials are rare, and each painting requires scrutiny to establish authenticity. The dealers report their business in portraits is still mostly with foreigners, but that situation is beginning to change.

After decades of neglect in China and the West, the special category of ancestor portraits is finally awakening interest. The discussion in the following pages is offered to help advance knowledge of this fascinating aspect of Chinese art and culture. •

11

Portrait of Empress Xiaozhuang
(Empress to the Daoguang Emperor,
r. 1821–50)

Qing dynasty, mid–19th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, approx. 190 x 115 cm
The Palace Museum, Beijing,
People's Republic of China
Photograph from The Palace Museum,
Beijing

Note the thick white makeup covering the empress' face, and the painted red dot on her lower lip, two standard features of an elite woman's beauty routine in the Qing dynasty.

1

Portraiture and Ancestor Rituals

In the late 1970s, art historian and museum director Sherman E. Lee raised a question that has since dominated the discussion of Chinese portrait paintings. He asked why Chinese (and Japanese) portraits, “true portraits as great works of art,” were so rare.¹ Lee’s analysis of the “iconic” portrait pointed to a major difference between Chinese portraits and their counterparts in European painting, namely the importance in China of portraits in sacrifices to ancestors.

The problem is that Chinese portraits have been evaluated with criteria based on European portraiture that ignore Chinese culture and customs. This does not deny the commonalities between portrait traditions. Use of portraits for religious purposes seems to be a universal response to what David Freedberg has called the “power of images.”² The Chinese term commonly used for portraits, *xiaoxiang*, does not distinguish between sculpture and painting, and throughout the centuries in China, portraits created in three- and two-dimensional form have appeared on altars, as they have in Europe. What is perhaps significantly different about the Chinese genre is its persistent linkage with rituals of death and ancestor worship.

The earliest painted portraits identified so far date to the Warring States (475–221 B.C.) and Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). These were tomb murals and funerary banners, such as a painted banner found covering the innermost coffin of the marquise of Dai, whose tomb at Mawangdui was one of the most celebrated archaeological finds of the twentieth century (fig. 1.1). Some scholars have posited that these tomb murals and banners portraying the deceased may on occasion have been viewed by mourners after the

1.1

Funeral banner from Tomb 1, Mawangdui, Hunan Province
Han dynasty, ca. 168 B.C.
Banner; ink and color on silk; 205 x 92 cm
Hunan Provincial Museum, Changsha
Photograph after Fu Juyou and Chen Songchang, *The Cultural Relics Unearthed from the Han Tombs at Mawangdui*, in English and Chinese (Changsha: Hunan Publishing House, 1992), 19

The meaning and use of this banner has engendered much scholarly debate, but the general iconography is agreed upon. The underworld is indicated at the bottom of the banner, above which is a platform on which the cloth-enshrouded corpse of the marquise of Dai has been laid out, surrounded by ritual vessels. On a platform higher up, the marquise is shown leaning on a staff standing below the entrance to the heavenly realm.

funeral ceremonies.³ Yet there is no firm evidence that either type of depiction of the deceased was used in postburial rituals.⁴ Most recently the Mawangdui banner has been convincingly identified as a “name banner” (*ming*), made to be placed over the deceased’s spirit tablet at the conclusion of mourning rites performed over the corpse and to serve as a focus of veneration.⁵ But some question as to the exact meaning of this and other funerary banners still remains. What is certain is that the association of an image of the deceased—nowadays it would be a photograph—and funerary ritual certainly has a long history in China (fig. 1.2).⁶ The use of a portrait as a substitute for the corpse, whether in three- or two-dimensional form, however, should be conceptually distinguished from rituals to ancestors, which are described below.

At least one example of a deceased parent’s portrait sculpture being kept at home is recorded for the Han dynasty, but the exact status and use of the image is unclear. The story of Ding Lan’s piety toward a wooden sculpture of his father was enough to earn him entry in a group known as the “paragons of filial piety.” In a late Han-period painting of this group, Ding Lan is shown in animated conversation with the static image of his father.⁷

The tradition of using both sculpted and painted portraits in sacrificial rites to deified officials, or worthies, also has a long history. Beginning in the second century B.C., images of Confucius (ca. 551–479 B.C.) and his seventy-two disciples were introduced into the temples dedicated to the sage in regional academies erected by the government. Debates by Han officials discussing the iconography and poses of these statues suggest that this was a widespread practice. Despite the objections of Neo-Confucian reformers, the placement of reliefs, statues, and paintings of Confucius and his disciples in these temples continued until the sixteenth century.⁸ Use of sculpted and painted portraits in popular religion has continued in Chinese communities down to the present day.⁹ In the Chinese context the use of portraits for public worship contrasts with worship of individuals as ancestors. In the former case, worship is open to all; in the latter, worship is limited to male descendants.¹⁰

Ancestor Worship

The transition from employing portraits for the worship of gods to using them for sacrifices before the ancestors was somewhat problematic. What Westerners call “ancestor worship” is rooted in the Chinese emphasis on the descent group and the belief that the spirits of the deceased inhabit a world that is not completely cut off from the world of the living. Death does not sever the relationship between the living and the dead. Although the corpse is a dreaded source of pollution, it can be transformed into a beneficent force through appropriate rituals. Even after burial of the corpse, some elements of the deceased person’s spirit linger and must be nurtured by his descendants. Ancestors properly cared for become sources of wealth, good luck, and many sons for their descendants. If they are neglected, however, the spirits of deceased persons can become malevolent and wreak misfortune not only on the family but also on the community, in the forms of ghosts.¹¹

Ancestor rites were initially the privileged preserve of rulers and the hereditary

elite who held official positions in the government bureaucracy. Sumptuary regulations separated the ruler's observances from those of his officials, and the officials' observances from those of commoners. Legally, before the Song dynasty (960–1279), commoners were not permitted to build ancestor temples, or halls (*jiamiao*), or to make offerings to ancestors beyond the generation of their grandparents. Regulations in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) strictly governed the number of generations of ancestors, the timing of the sacrifices, and the type of ancestor hall that commoners could construct, and these rules were reproduced in many genealogies.¹² It was not until the eighteenth century that commoners' ancestor halls emerged as familiar structures on the rural landscape in south China.¹³

The strictures imposed on rituals for ancestors beyond the grandfather's generation contrasted with the Confucian encouragement of rituals performed for one's parents and grandparents in altars set up within the home. Unlike rituals performed in the hall, which take place only at particular times during the year, rituals at the domestic altar entailed daily presentations of food and incense to the deceased by family members. Ritual commemoration was more frequent, more personalized, and often focused on an image (nowadays a photograph) as well as the traditional spirit tablet. This was the setting for which ritual ancestor portraits were commissioned.

Despite the gradual relaxation of the restrictions on ancestor rituals after the tenth century, the close relationship of this religious practice with rulership continued to influence emperors in various dynasties. The male ancestors of a patrilineal descent group were sources of symbolic capital that was closely guarded by their descendants. The more powerful the person in real life, the more powerful his spirit would be in the afterlife. From Shang times (ca. 1600–1050 B.C.), the spirits of imperial ancestors were considered a source of sacred power to be monopolized by the ruler. Different theories evolved to explain how the ancestors of previous ruling houses could become the "property" of a new dynasty. Successive dynasties incorporated the ancestors of earlier ruling houses in a Temple to Rulers of Successive Dynasties (*Lidai di wang miao*). Imperial ancestors thus remained an imperial monopoly until 1911.

1.2

Chinese funeral procession
Republic period, 1910
Black-and-white photograph, Peabody Essex
Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Photograph from Peabody Essex Museum,
negative no. MP3

Here an ancestor portrait painting is being carried in a shrine as part of a funeral procession that took place at the close of the Qing dynasty. Painted portraits were later replaced in most funerary rituals by photographs.

Belief in the power of ancestors, which predates the advent of Confucianism, was remolded by Confucian ritual writings. Confucianism was adopted as an approved state doctrine in the second century B.C. and became orthodox belief in subsequent centuries. In place of the folk notion of reciprocity between the living and their ancestors, Confucianism stressed filial piety.

The *Analects*, which records conversations between Confucius and his disciples, refers frequently to the duty individuals owe their parents. Confucius, asked to define filial piety, answered: "That parents, when alive, should be served according to *li*; that, when dead, they should be buried according to *li*; and that offerings should be made according to *li*."¹⁴

Li can be translated both as "ritual" and as "proper behavior." Originally the term seems to have referred to religious rites, and even in its more generalized usage in Confucian writings it retains a religious dimension. Confucianism provided detailed prescriptions for the way in which the ancestor rites should be conducted, and rationalized the motivation for these rites.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Confucianism underwent a revival. Confucian thinkers like Zhu Xi (1130–1200) sought to abolish Buddhist and Daoist influence on the religious practices of commoners. The impact of the Neo-Confucian concern with moral reform was heightened by the expansion of printing during the Song period. Printing, which enabled wider dissemination of books, stimulated Confucian thinkers to standardize the classical texts.

Chinese Portraiture

Unlike Europeans, Chinese regard portraiture as a genre suited mainly to kinsmen or close friends. Richard Vinograd notes that Chinese portraits "primarily served the purposes of the family or lineage" and even informal portraiture "was relatively private in that it addressed small groups of friends and associates."¹⁵ Chinese rulers seem to have had the same prejudices against widespread public dissemination of their images.¹⁶ By the Han dynasty, Chinese rulers knew about the custom "in the far west" of putting the faces of kings on metal coins, but they never did so before the twentieth century. Commoners were prohibited from possessing images of current or former rulers¹⁷

Part of the power of visual images of imperial ancestors seems to have depended on concealing them much of the time. Patricia Ebrey notes that

the statues of Song emperors were not publicly displayed. . . . It was only on special occasions that high officials were granted the honor of being allowed to view the imperial portraits, and efforts were taken to make sure that local temples with imperial portraits put up curtains around them. The only time ordinary citizens got to see them was when they were transported from where they were made . . . to where they were installed.¹⁸

The tradition of using portraits in ancestor rites was itself a development that probably followed the introduction of Buddhism into China. Edward Schafer writes that emperors of the Tang dynasty (618–907) sometimes had their portraits hung in

Buddhist temples, and several anecdotes suggest that the power of the living person was believed to reside in the portrait. Worship of portraits of living rulers, however, is quite different from using portraits in ancestor rites, and there is insufficient information concerning the single example provided by Schafer, of portraits of the eighteen earlier Tang emperors kept in the Zhaojing Hall, to know whether rituals were performed before them.¹⁹

Unequivocal evidence of portraits being used in imperial ancestral rituals exists for the Song dynasty. According to Ebrey, “Until Song times, portraits of emperors were rarely used in ancestral rites as . . . objects before which descendants or other worshippers made offerings of wine, food, and incense.”²⁰ Ebrey’s study suggests that Buddhism was the source of this innovation. In 968 the founder of the Song dynasty, Taizu, placed portraits of his parents in a Buddhist temple. Buddhist monks and nuns (some portraits of mothers were lodged in Buddhist cloisters) would pray for the souls of the deceased. This was an act of filial piety, but one quite separate from the later introduction of portraits into ancestor rituals. Ebrey supplies several facts that support this interpretation. Before 1010 all but one of the many temples housing imperial portraits were Buddhist.

Until the 1080s, the images of empresses and mothers of emperors (the two were not necessarily the same) were not paired with those of emperors, but rather were treated “almost entirely separately.” Women’s images continued to be housed in Buddhist temples even after a Daoist cult of the imperial ancestors was created by Emperor Zhenzong (reigned 997–1022). Later, when special halls for imperial ancestors were created, the portraits of women were lodged in halls that were separate from those for portraits of men.²¹

The first time portraits appeared in an arena of ancestor worship seems to have been the ritual of 1082, when portrait statues of the ancestors were formally introduced into a new hall, the Jingling Palace. What had been styled a “founder’s shrine” (*yuan miao*), in honor of the dynastic founder, became a sanctuary, located in the capital, housing images of all of the Song emperors and empresses, who received sacrifices on their death days. At the same time, Northern Song (960–1126) rulers continued to place portraits of empresses in Buddhist and Daoist temples and to permit localities that had historic associations with a particular emperor to house images of him.

When a palace complex was constructed in Hangzhou, the new capital of the Southern Song (1127–1279) rulers in Zhejiang Province, the Southern Song emperors continued to use painted portraits and sculpture in ancestor worship. The imperial ancestor cult was located in several major sites. At the Taimiao, the first-rank temple of the ancestors, Confucian ritual specialists led by imperially appointed princes performed the ceremonies in front of ancestor tablets.²² The Jingling Palace, which housed sculpted images of the imperial ancestors, was where the emperor conducted the sacrifices four times a year. Death days were commemorated with rituals performed by Buddhist and Daoist clergy, followed by a ritual in which palace ladies took part, led by the empress. Other rituals were performed before painted portraits in the Tianzhang Pavilion on the first and fifteenth of each lunar month and on the birthdays of the ancestors, but the imperial family did not take part in these rites. At another site in the palace compound, the Qinxian Xiaosi Hall, the emperor burned incense daily before

other painted portraits of his ancestors. Finally, images of emperors and empresses were installed at shrines near their tombs, which were visited during the spring and fall by imperial clansmen.

The Song imperial rituals were especially rich in the incorporation of different representations of ancestors. The Buddhist influence remained strongest on the domestic level of ritual observance.²³ The most formal and highest ranked of the Song sites for ancestor rituals used only tablets, contrasting with the most intimate domestic site, which featured painted portraits, the Qinxian Xiaosi Hall, where the emperor himself burned incense every day. Ebrey suggests that perhaps “visual images had the potential to move people emotionally in a way . . . written words did not.”²⁴

What did the portrait statues of Song emperors and empresses look like? Since none survive, Ebrey bases her analysis on the fifteen extant paintings of these rulers but notes that the statues, unlike most of the figures in the paintings, would have worn formal court robes and held tablets. Some aspects of these Song portraits (see fig. 3.9) seem very much like the portraits in the Sackler’s collection that date to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The elaborate dragon chairs, footstools, and brocade covers over the chairbacks can be seen in the paintings from both periods. What is markedly different, however, is the pose. None of the extant Song portraits depicts the subject in a frontal position, the pose found in all of the Qing portraits.

The use of portraits in ancestor worship was not sanctioned by Confucian scholars, many of whom objected to the practice. Song Neo-Confucians, like their Ming successors, also objected to the use of sculpted images on state altars. Zhu Xi fulminated against ordinary (ignorant) people who “bowed and prostrated themselves before idol figures . . . beseeching them for their sustenance,” though he himself was said to bow before an image of Confucius in his “family temple.”²⁵ Arguments against the use of images cited the lack of historical precedent for images in Chinese antiquity; the impossibility of ensuring that the image was an accurate depiction, an essential basis for efficacy in sacrifice; and the notion that images were a foreign (Buddhist) import, which had nothing to do with the Chinese tradition.²⁶

The admonitions of Cheng Yi (1033–1107), the great Neo-Confucian scholar, indicate that in his day many people used portraits instead of tablets in their ancestor rites. Cheng Yi states that it is all right for wealthy families to display portraits of ancestors in portrait halls, but unless the depiction is exact and accurate, portraits are inappropriate for ritual use. This remained the dominant position taken by Confucians through later periods.²⁷

Zhu Xi himself wrote *Jia li* (Rituals for family life), which presented ordinary people with a description of the proper rites. Of all his writings, this work was probably the most widely read.²⁸ In it, he confronted the question of whether a portrait was needed for ancestor rituals:

Men in ancient times chiseled wood to make *zhong* to be the focus of the spirits. . . . But the families of gentlemen and commoners know nothing of this. . . . In the current custom everyone draws an image on the back of the soul cloth. This is all right for men who had portraits made while alive. But what about women

who during their lifetimes lived deep in the women's quarters and never went out except in a closed carriage with a veil over their faces! How can one have a painter, after their deaths, go right into the secluded room, uncover their faces, take up a brush, and copy their likeness? This is a gross violation of ritual!²⁹

The full text of Zhu Xi's fulminations suggests that portrait statues rather than paintings may have been used in domestic ancestor rites. A portrait statue, which could be clothed, might be based on a painted portrait or sketch to be used for ancestor rituals. Zhu Xi noted, "It is the custom for some people to use caps, hats, clothes, and shoes, to embellish the portrait to look like the person. This is particularly vulgar and should not be practiced."³⁰

Yuan Portraits

The imperial tradition of portraiture continued into the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). Two paintings of Khubilai Khan (reigned 1280–94) and his empress Chabi, held by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, are said to be the work of a Nepalese artist, Anige (1245–1306), and were models designed to be enlarged into full figures woven into religious textiles. Historical records date the practice to the Chengzong reign (1293–1307), when "numerous orders were given that portraits be painted of the emperors and empresses, and that they be converted to woven silk."³¹ These *kesi*, or silk tapestries, were created in a Buddhist context, under the supervision of the Superintendencies for Buddhist Icons. Extant tapestries, including those created in the early fourteenth century, depict the rulers as small kneeling figures in the bottom corners where the donors are traditionally represented (fig. 1.3). Another government agency, the Office of Imperial Ancestral Worship (Taixi zongyin yuan), was in charge of sacrifices at temples to the deceased Mongol emperors.³² According to the *Yuan History* (*Yuan shi*), the imperial portraits were displayed in a portrait hall (*yingtang*), an "independent building within a temple complex that housed portraits of an emperor and his consort and where Buddhist and sacrificial rites to the deceased emperor and empress were performed."³³

From at least the Song dynasty until 1530, portraits of imperial ancestors in woven, painted, and sculpted forms were used in Buddhist and Daoist rituals and during the Song dynasty in rituals that were ordinarily conducted by Confucian ritual specialists. During the Yuan dynasty, a portrait of Khubilai Khan hung in the Guangsheng si, a Buddhist monastery in southern Shanxi Province, which was patronized by the rulers; rituals to celebrate imperial birthdays were performed before the portrait.³⁴

Indications suggesting the popular practice with respect to portraits and mortuary rites have been in tomb murals since the Han dynasty, but it is from the eleventh century onward that these tombs become most informative. In the eleventh century, according to Dieter Kuhn, the local elites in north China suddenly began to build tombs that depicted the tomb occupants as a couple. Painted over low bas-reliefs or directly onto the wall, the couple sits on chairs at a table; sometimes attendants are standing in the background. Similar portraits of the tomb occupants found in tombs of the Jin (1115–1234) and Yuan dynasties in north China suggest continuity in what may have

1.3

Detail of the *Vajrabhairava Mandala* with portraits of the Yuan Emperor Wenzong and Prince Koshila

Yuan dynasty, ca. 1328–32

Silk tapestry (*kesi*);

image only, 245.5 x 209.0 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1992 (1992.54)

Photograph from the Metropolitan Museum of Art

The donors are portrayed kneeling toward the center in their role as pious worshipers. Scholars believe these figures were modeled after painted portraits.

Detail of a mural on the north wall of a tomb in Dongercun, Pucheng County, Shaanxi Province

Yuan dynasty, 1269

Ink and color on plaster; tomb height 274 cm

Photograph after Liu Hengwu, "Shaanxi Pucheng Dongercun Yuanmubihua" (Yuan dynasty tomb wall painting in the town of Donger, Pucheng County, Shaanxi Province), *Shoucangjia* 34, no. 2 (1999): 16

This painting exemplifies many of the common features in northern Chinese portraits of tomb occupants. Husband and wife sit in roundbacked chairs in front of a landscape screen over which a tablet with their names and death dates has been superimposed. Tables set with wine offerings appear behind the couple. What is unusual by Chinese standards of the Ming and Qing dynasties is that the woman is positioned to the left of her husband.

started as a regional tradition.³⁵ These portraits closely anticipate Ming and Qing hanging scrolls created for ancestor worship in domestic and temple settings. Tombs in Beiyukou, Yuanbao Shan, and Dongercun include portrait paintings of a husband and wife seated side by side (fig.1.4).³⁶ These tombs are located, respectively, in Wenshui County, Shanxi Province; in Chifeng County in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region; and in Dongercun, Pucheng County, Shaanxi Province. The figures are shown turned in a three-quarter view, the most popular pose before frontality became a defining characteristic of ancestor portraits in the sixteenth century. In all three portraits, the man is seated in a roundbacked folding chair, which became the most favored type of chair in which to depict figures in Ming and Qing portraiture.

A young female attendant stands to the side of the women in the tomb portraits and a young boy is in the same position beside the men. In the Yuanbao Shan tomb portrait, the girl appears to hold a cloth-wrapped box and the boy holds a washbasin. These implements anticipate attributes often observed in Ming and Qing paintings. Modern folk tradition interprets the items as a rebus. The word for "box" (*he*) is a homonym for another word meaning "peace" (*he*) and the compound word for "washbasin" (*xipen*) contains a homonym for another word meaning "happiness" (*xi*). Rebuses were common in the Yuan dynasty, but the objects may simply be realistic reflections of items that servants would often hold for their masters. In the two portraits in the Sackler's collection with attendants serving the husband and wife, the youths who attend the women hold boxes (see figs. 2.6, 4.10); a third portrait represents a man served by two boys (see fig. 3.13). The young boys in the portraits hold a scroll, a box of books, or implements of high office (a *hu* plaque and a wrapped tablet) respectively. Perhaps these objects are statements about male erudition and female beauty (a cosmetics box).

The Beiyukou tomb has another distinctive feature that relates to Ming and Qing ancestor portraits. On a cloth-draped table that occupies the focal point between the tomb occupants, an oversized spirit tablet inscribed "grandfather's tablet" (*zufu zhi wei*)

appears, as in the Sackler portrait in figure 2.6. The stylistic commonalities between these tomb portraits and later portraits used for ancestor rituals deserve further research and study. On the one hand, as Kuhn notes, “The inside of the tomb was not a suitable place for a portrait in memory of a deceased ancestor.”³⁷ Some of the poses, notably in tombs in north China from the eleventh century, seem to fit comfortably into the depictions of daily life that fill the other tomb walls. Nonetheless, these Song, Jin, and Yuan tomb portraits seem to presage many of the conventions that can be found in Ming and Qing ancestor portraits.

Ming Portraits

Information on early Ming practice is not sufficient to determine whether ancestor rites within the palace continued to employ portraits, or whether portraits were used in ancestral rites performed by commoners. The abundance of portraits from the second half of the Ming period and evidence of their commercial production, however, have led scholars to believe that they were hung at the New Year for family rituals.³⁸ As will be elaborated upon below, commemorative portraits could be hung for more than one occasion in a year, but the New Year was the major time for ceremonial hanging of the portraits.

Scholarly attention during the Ming focused instead on the presence of sculpted images in the temples to Confucius. As summarized in a recent study,³⁹ among the primary objections raised by scholars during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was that one could not find evidence of the practice in information about rituals performed in ancient times. Some Ming scholars argued that images did indeed exist in the native tradition, but others identified images as a foreign import that entered China along with Buddhism. Confucians argued that sacrifices to images would fail if the depictions were inaccurate in the slightest detail. In the case of sacrifices to ancestors, the shared blood relationship of the performer with the deceased ensured that the ritual would be efficacious. They urged emperors to follow the precedent set in 1372 by the founder of the Ming dynasty, who removed statues of Confucius and his disciples from the Imperial University and replaced them with wooden tablets (but the statues were back in place by 1410). These proposals were eventually implemented by the Jiajing emperor (reigned 1522–66). From 1530, tablets became the primary objects of sacrifice in the Confucius temples and, it has been assumed, on ancestral altars.

Imperial Portraits

The imperial portraits of rulers from before the Qing dynasty are preserved in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei. An account of their provenance is part of the story of the Qing conquest. In 1644, Peking, the capital of the Ming empire, was terrorized by troops of the rebel Li Zicheng. Ming troops were unable to stop Li's forces from entering the city on April 26; the night before, the last Ming emperor, abandoned by his military commanders, hanged himself. Li and his followers terrorized the residents, insulted Ming officials, and extorted funds from the wealthy. The Manchu forces,

invited south of the Great Wall into Ming territory by General Wu Sangui, “liberated” Peking on June 6 and were welcomed by the city’s populace. When the Qing troops entered the Forbidden City, they discovered the portraits of previous dynastic rulers held by the Ming as well as portraits of Ming emperors and empresses.

According to Nie Chongzheng, the monopoly exercised by a new dynasty over portraits of its predecessors goes back at least to the Mongol conquest, when captured Song portraits were moved by the Yuan rulers to their capital, Dadu. Anning Jing notes that the Chinese imperial portraits were “highly valued” by Mongol rulers and adds, “The collection of the earlier imperial portraits was not only a matter of appreciation but more importantly a claim for legitimate lineage of the dynasty.”⁴⁰

The fall of the Yuan caused ownership of Song and Yuan portraits to be transferred to the Ming, while in 1644 all of these portraits became the property of the Qing imperial household. In 1749 the portraits of rulers of previous dynasties were moved to the Nanxundian, a hall located in the Forbidden City.⁴¹ After 1911, when the Qing dynasty ended, the portraits in the Nanxundian became the property of the new republic, and after 1949 they were transferred by the Guomindang government to Taiwan, where 152 imperial portraits are currently located in the National Palace Museum.⁴²

The stored portraits of previous rulers and empresses were apparently not put to ritual use. In the temple dedicated to the emperors and kings of previous dynasties (Lidai di wang miao), officials sacrificed before tablets at regular intervals, following a tradition originating in the Zhou dynasty (1050–221 B.C.) of honoring the ancestors of preceding dynasties. In addition a descendant of the Ming imperial house was appointed to perform rituals at the Ming tombs.⁴³ In 1911 ownership of the Qing imperial portraits remained with Puyi, the Xuantong emperor (reigned 1909–12). The Manchus adopted many of the Ming customs for the ancestor rites. Hongtaiji (1592–1643) built a Chinese-style ancestor temple in his capital, Shengjing, or Mukden (present-day Shenyang), and after 1644 the Qing used the Ming dynasty’s Temple of the Ancestors (Taimiao) as its own first-rank ancestor altar. Just as in the Ming, the rituals performed each quarter and at the end of the year in the Temple of the Ancestors were conducted according to regulations issued by the Confucian-dominated Board of Rites, before tablets. This was also the form in which ancestors were added as objects of ancillary sacrifice (*pei*) to the sacrifice of heaven, and the form in which imperial ancestors were installed in the Hall of the Ancestors (Fengxiandian).⁴⁴

A survey of funerary and ancestor rituals for the Qing imperial family illustrates the ways in which portraits were used for ritual purposes. Since the structure of the imperial death rituals paralleled those of commoners, the following description, unless otherwise noted, applies generally to ordinary families as well.

Elsewhere, the elaborate rituals that took place upon the death of an emperor or empress have been described.⁴⁵ Although the state ritual handbooks do not mention them, imperial portraits—referred to as “sacred likenesses” (*shengrong*, *yurong*, *shenyu*) were used in imperial funerary rites. After the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35) died, for example, his portrait was hung in his former bedchamber in the princely palace (Yonghegong) that his father had bestowed upon him. Daily rituals were performed in front of the portrait before the emperor was buried. Rituals before the

portraits of the Xianfeng (reigned 1851–61) and Tongzhi (reigned 1862–74) emperors were also performed in the long intervals between the sealing of the coffin and burial.⁴⁶

Part of the funerary ritual required the creation of ancestor tablets for a deceased emperor and empress (see chapter 5, “Portraits at the Qing court,” for details). Upon burial the permanent ancestral tablets began their existence as vessels for the spirit of the deceased person. The tablets were installed in the Temple of the Ancestors, in the Hall of the Ancestors, and in the sacrificial hall at the tomb. Tablets were also displayed at the first-rank state altars (the Altar of Heaven, the Altar of Earth, and the Altar of Land and Grain) as ancillary objects of sacrifice. Imperial portraits were also placed in the Shouhuangdian, a hall described below.

We can follow this process for the death rituals of the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–96), who died on February 7, 1799. Immediately after he was buried on October 13, 1799, his permanent spirit tablet was transported to Peking and placed in the Temple of the Ancestors, then in the Hall of the Ancestors on October 16. A prince was sent to install the tablet at the sacrificial hall on the tomb site. On October 19 the emperor’s portrait and those of his two empresses were installed in the Shouhuangdian. Five days later, the jade tablets and seals bearing the emperor’s and empress’s death names were placed in the Temple of the Ancestors.⁴⁷ Imperial portraits were also deposited in the Temple of the Ancestors in the pre-1644 Qing capital, Shengjing, or Mukden. Beginning in 1858, a portrait accompanied the jade tablets and seals bearing the posthumous name of a deceased emperor that were sent to Shengjing.⁴⁸

The Shouhuangdian was a hall that stood in Jingshan, a park that lay immediately north of the Shenwu gate of the Forbidden City. Built by the Yongzheng emperor and renovated in 1749–50, the Shouhuangdian had a spatial layout paralleling that of the Temple of the Ancestors. Seven shrines were arrayed against the back wall of the main hall, with that of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722) occupying the central position. The shrines of the Daoguang (reigned 1821–50), Xianfeng, and Tongzhi emperors were arranged against the east and west walls.⁴⁹

Unlike the Temple of the Ancestors and the Hall of the Ancestors, the Shouhuangdian was not an official state altar; it was not included among the altars where state sacrifices were performed.⁵⁰ Whereas both of the state ancestral halls featured Nurgaci (the dynastic founder) as the primary object of worship, the Shouhuangdian functioned as the imperial equivalent of a family ancestor hall for the descendants of the Qianlong emperor, by making his grandfather the primary object of worship. Finally, the Shouhuangdian was a hall where domestic rituals were performed by women as well as men.

It was the Qianlong emperor who introduced the custom of sacrificing in front of the imperial portraits in the Shouhuangdian at the New Year. On the last day of the old year, seven standing screens were erected in the hall, in front of the permanent shrines. The portraits of twenty-five imperial ancestors, beginning with Nurgaci and ending with the Tongzhi emperor and their empresses, were unrolled and hung on these screens, with ritual vessels set up in front of them (figs. 1.5, 1.6). The emperor would visit the hall on the first day of the New Year to offer sacrifices in front of these paintings; his sons would worship on the following day, then the portraits would be rolled up and

1.5
Interior of the Shouhuangdian in the
Forbidden City, Peking
Republic period, ca. 1930
Photograph after *Gugong zhoukan* 21
(1930): 84

This rare glimpse of the interior of what might be termed the domestic altar for the Qing imperial family was probably taken several decades after the end of the dynasty, but the arrangement of paintings and altar tables seems congruent with the Qing-period descriptions.

stored again.⁵¹ In imperial weddings the new couple was introduced to ancestors by performing rituals at ancestor portraits in this hall. It was here, too, that Puyi formally reported the end of the dynasty to his ancestors in 1912.⁵²

Portraits were also hung in the private palace quarters in the imperial villa Yuanmingyuan as well as in the Forbidden City. From the Yongzheng reign through the Daoguang reign, emperors and other members of the imperial family lit incense in front of ancestral tablets at a private altar in the eastern Buddha hall of the Yangxindian, a palace within the Forbidden City, and in its counterpart in Yuanmingyuan. Portraits of the emperor's father and of the emperor's natural mother, who was frequently a low-ranking consort and not the empress, would be the objects of private worship in palace residences. The Xianfeng emperor, for example, performed rites at the portraits of his grandfather, Renzong (the Jiaqing emperor; reigned 1796–1820), and his mother, Empress Xiaoquan (see fig. 11). Later, portraits of the Xianfeng and Tongzhi emperors also received this kind of private worship on birthdays, the New Year, and other special occasions.⁵³

Princes were worshiped by their descendants. Regulations first issued in 1636 stipulated that when members of the Aisin Gioro main line (the imperial lineage) were given princely titles, they should erect family ancestor temples (*jiamiao*). In later decades, the imperial court specified which first- and second-rank princes could erect *jiamiao*, the structure and spatial layout of the temples, the sacrificial offerings, and the dates on which sacrifices should be performed. Princes who died without heirs would have tablets placed in the Temple of the Ancestors for ancillary worship. In addition, princes who had been outstanding in their service to the throne had their tablets installed in a side hall at the Temple of the Ancestors and received ancillary worship. Worship at the family ancestor temples was to take place after the princes had participated in the rites at the Temple of the Ancestors.⁵⁴

The published reminiscences of a descendant of Chunying, Prince Rui, whose portrait is in the Sackler's collection (see fig. 6.2), offers evidence of the persistence of such funerary customs among princely households. In the Republican period, when the author was a boy, the family still lived in its mansion. The family temple, also called the portrait hall (*yingtang*) after the colloquial name for ancestor portraits, was a large structure with very high roof beams holding several altar tables and filled with spirit tablets incised with Manchu and Chinese inscriptions. On the last day of the year, approximately thirty portraits of the preceding princes and their primary wives were hung in the shrines behind the spirit tablets. The sacrifices to the ancestors took place after worship at the Buddhist altars, with everyone above the age of ten participating. In 1924 the author was barely ten, but as the primary officiant, and with assistance from an old eunuch muttering instructions at his side, he led sixty-four kinsmen in the rituals before the portraits. It was so dark, he recalled, that he could not see their prostrations and risings, and only heard the rustle of their clothing as they performed the "two kneelings and six head knockings" prescribed for the occasion. After the men finished, the women were ushered in to perform the rite.⁵⁵

Ancestor Portraits in Chinese Society

Portraits were used for private rituals by Qing imperial family members and by commoners, who hung portraits at the end of the year to receive offerings and the kowtows of family members in the New Year (fig.1.7). A chapter in the mid-eighteenth-century novel *Hongloumeng* (The story of the stone; or, Dream of the red chamber) illustrates many similarities between imperial practice and the customs of the wealthy, including the convention of displaying the portraits by hanging them on brilliantly decorated screens. The author, Cao Xueqin, describes how food offerings were passed from hand to hand by the kin assembled in front of the portraits until the dishes reached the hands of the oldest family member, who

raised them up reverently towards the portraits before laying them down on the altar. . . . Meat, vegetables, rice, soup, cakes, wine and tea [were] all . . . transmitted to the altar by this human chain. . . . Now came the most solemn part of the ceremony. . . . Grandmother Jia, clasping a little bundle of burning joss-sticks with both her hands, knelt down for the incense offering; the entire congregation of men and women . . . knelt down in perfect time with her and proceeded to go through the motions of the Great Obeisance. . . . For some minutes nothing could be heard but the faint tinkling made by jade girdle pendants and tiny golden bells and the soft scrape and scuffle of cloth-soled boots and shoes.⁵⁶

In some parts of north China, where lineage organizations tended to lack corporate property and ancestor halls, scrolls with the ancestors' names, depicting their place in the genealogy, might be the only representation of an ancestor that many households possessed. Northwest Chinese households often hung scrolls with images of multiple generations of ancestors in a single composition. Or sometimes a painting displayed portrait images of only the apical ancestors and represented other generations by spirit tablets. The food and floral offerings that would be placed on an altar before ancestor portraits are also sometimes illustrated in these paintings, helping the modern viewer to reconstruct the original ritual performances (fig. 1.8).

1.6

Altar garniture with dragon and cloud motifs

Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and period, 1736–96

Cast bronze with cast and cold-worked decoration, with brown coating; heights: censer 32.2 cm; candlesticks, 38.1 cm; vases, 26.7 cm

Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; museum purchase, Robert H. Clague Collection

Photograph courtesy Phoenix Art Museum

In traditional China a full set of altar furnishings consists of the five pieces shown here, arranged with the censer placed in the center. The impressive quality of this set, which bears a reign mark, suggests it was made for palace use or for someone connected to the imperial house.

1.7

Scene of Family Worship from album of twenty-four leaves illustrating famous sites and customs in Peking

Anglo-Chinese workshop painting

Qing dynasty, 2d half 19th century

Watercolor on paper; image only,

8.6 x 21.9 cm

Collection unknown

Photograph © Christie's Images, New York

Westerners living in China ordered albums illustrating their foreign surroundings to take home. The details in such paintings were usually faithful, though the Chinese artists also had to cater to foreign taste. This scene of a man kowtowing before his ancestor's portrait seems reliable. The portrait hangs above a *kang* (a heated seating platform) that had been temporarily transformed into an altar. The room is decorated for the New Year. Of special note is the wooden frame around the portrait suggesting popular adoption of this Western custom as early as the second half of the nineteenth century.

Wealthy lineages, which worshiped at ancestor halls with tablets, also possessed ancestor portraits. The wealthy might have separate halls for the tablets and for the portraits, or mix the two in the same space.⁵⁷ David Kidd, an American who lived in Peking from 1946 to 1950, described a visit to such an ancestor hall belonging to his wife's family. The temple was neglected, the spirit tablets on a tiered altar "hung with dusty cobwebs and leaning giddily in all directions." Against the walls stood large lacquered chests, which contained "tightly rolled red scrolls, each marked with a name written in black on a strip of gold paper." Kidd estimated that there were at least two hundred scrolls in the chest he had opened, and there were several chests in the hall. He asked his wife why they had not been sold, and she laughed, "Who wants pictures of someone else's ancestors?"⁵⁸

Portraits of the deceased were paraded in funeral processions and put on family altars to receive daily offerings of food and incense. As photography became popular, photographs of the deceased were prominent features of funerals and even appeared on gravestones. The nationwide mourning rituals performed before Chairman Mao's portrait in 1976 were a modern equivalent of the rituals described above. The ritual use of portraits—in all media—remains a living tradition in many Chinese households. •

1.8

Ancestor Painting with a Presentation of Offerings at the Altar

Qing dynasty, late 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;

image only, 195 x 97 cm

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander

Wilmerding

Paintings like this that combine spirit tablets, portrait images, and a depiction of ritual offerings may have been created as a substitute for a family ancestor hall by individuals unable to afford one. Blank tablets were intended to be filled with the names and birth and death dates of family members after they passed away. The two attendants (possibly intended to be proxies for descendants) are offering wine, a pig's head, and a roast fowl to the ancestors.

2

Visual Conventions in Portraiture

Portraits for ritual veneration follow a strict visual code suited to fulfilling their religious function, but more pictorial variety exists than is usually recognized, including regional styles.¹ The subsequent pages review the key defining features of ancestor portraits, standard variations, and other types of images that share common elements. It is important at the outset, however, to recognize that something is lost by examining ancestor portraits in an analytic framework. As Richard Vinograd has cautioned, “Viewing such formal portraits in isolation may involve a distortion of their original impact, which should have depended on a real or implied surrounding of ritual space, furnishing, and performance.”² The heady perfume of wafting incense smoke, gleaming altar vessels lit by flickering candles, and the rustle of silk garments as family members knelt before the paintings no doubt contributed to the commanding authority of ancestor portraits. Yet even when studied in isolation, these paintings project an aura of imposing power.

Before proceeding it is necessary briefly to address some of the ambiguities surrounding the term “ancestor portrait” and ask if a painting is determined to be an ancestor portrait based on style, function, or a relationship between the two. This question arises in part because a large number of portraits invoke the iconic pose but, unlike the typical ancestor portrait, place the figure in an emblematic or narrative setting (see fig. 2.16 for an example of the general type). Some scholars believe that all such formal, en face portraits were intended for family veneration and therefore can be called ancestor portraits.³ While they may have been used for some level of informal

memorial veneration, portraits of this type do not conform to the most widely accepted visual code for images to be hung above altars during the annual rites to the ancestors. A degree of overlap and ambiguity between types of portraits is recognized, but these emblematic images can best be understood as formal commemorative portraits separate from ancestor likenesses. In this book, it is only portraits that follow the strict visual schema to be discussed below that are called “ancestor portraits.”

The Archetypal Ancestor Portrait

An ancestor portrait is always in the hanging-scroll format and depicts a forebear shown full-length, customarily in a rigidly frontal and symmetrical pose seated in a chair, and wearing formal, highly decorated clothing. Always positioned at the center of the composition, the ancestor’s face is the main focus of attention and the expressions of all ancestors are virtually identical—dignified and detached, with a somber forward gaze and impassive mouth. The ancestor seems shrouded in stillness, removed from all worldly activity, and never performs a gesture more active than fingering a costume accessory. These conventions of the iconic pose derive from traditions of portraying deities and rulers in China as images meant to inspire awe and devotion (see chapter 3, “Realism and the Iconic Pose”).

In Western portraits, including funeral effigies, a person is typically portrayed with a particularized expression and individualized gestures that animate the figure and suggest a continued presence in the world of the living; ancestors are memorialized as they were in life. In China, on the other hand, forebears are represented as having achieved a supramundane level of existence—the revered state of ancestorhood that was a universal aspiration in traditional China.⁴ The emphatically static, rigid pose of the sitters in Chinese ancestor portraits manifests this rarified, imperturbable state of being.

As mentioned earlier, verisimilitude is crucial to the efficacy of an ancestor portrait and therefore the deceased’s face is rendered faithfully. In contrast, general practice is to paint the sitter’s body more schematically, with little concern for personal traits and usually lacking organic structural coherence. Bodies in ancestor portraits seem to be little more than display racks for clothing that by its color and decoration announces social standing, which in addition to an accurate record of the face is the other primary nugget of information that an ancestor portrait is expected to capture.

One of the striking features about Chinese ancestor portraits is a fairly rigorous exclusion of references to the sitter’s personality beyond what can be inferred from physiognomy, or face reading. In traditional China, physiognomy was a widely influential part of the cultural mindset. Physical appearance was believed to be directly correlated with inborn character traits and one’s destiny, and was seen as a reliable predictor of crucial details, such as longevity, career success, and prosperity. Hints of personal character beyond physiognomic traits are rare in ancestor portraits. The presence of a Buddhist rosary in a sitter’s hand, as seen in *Portrait of Lady Guan* (fig. 2.1), or of an archer’s thumb ring, as visible in *Portrait of Daišan* (see fig. 6.4), is the most revealing personal detail likely to be included. The systematic absence of references to a person’s

奉

天承運

皇帝制曰臣能報國心豈戀乎
室家婦克相夫寵自邀乎綸
綍既壹儀之濟美宜朝命之
均霑爾都統加二級石文英
繼妻開氏有美能令無攸自
遂敦修內政四德信其能兼
端履前徽百禄宜其武荷茲
以覃恩封爾為一品夫人於
戲煥龍文於黻誥載揚貞順
之風敍翟羽於文茵益著榮
嘉之則尚勤女誠用佐官方
康熙三十六年七月十九日
頒

像

昔

康熙歲次丙申閏三月朔日
敬書

2.1

Portrait of Lady Guan

(ca. mid-17th to early 18th century)

Qing dynasty, early 18th century, or
later copy

Inscription dated 1716: see appendix 2 for
translation

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 211.7 x 113.8 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.121

Lady Guan wears the full court dress of a titled lady. She also wears three earrings in each earlobe, which is a sign of a banner-woman. This portrait belongs to a pair with one of her husband, Shi Wenying (see appendix 1 fig. 38). Her impassive face seems rather masklike, which is more often the case in portraits of relatively young court women than for men or older women. Nonetheless, the sharp chin and narrow eyes are personalized features that inflect the portrait with authority as a true likeness. Lady Guan is shown fingering a Buddhist rosary, which is an expression of personal character not often encountered in ancestor portraits.

The superscription on the portrait is dated to 1716, but the painting could be a later copy.

2.2

Portrait of Boggodo, Prince Zhuang

(1650–1723)

Qing dynasty, 18th century, or later copy

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 215.7 x 152.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.78

The immense size of this scroll and the ornate brocade material chosen for the mounting lend a regal sumptuousness to the portrait. This impression is consistent with the image itself, which shows Boggodo seated upon an elaborate gold-decorated lacquer throne on a colorful carpet. Boggodo presided over one of the wealthiest princely estates in the empire, although he was not active in official life. This may have been a wise decision, given the turmoil of court politics in his day. Boggodo was granted by the court the special right to wear a peacock feather, which in his case was a “three-eyed” feather, a top honor. The number of eyes on a peacock feather indicated status.

2.3

Portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun (1688–1755), and Wife

Qing dynasty, 2d half 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 187.6 x 161.8 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.88

This portrait is one of two in the Sackler's collection of Yinti (see fig. 2.14). Here he appears quite elderly, with sunken cheeks and crow's-feet, and his right eye is afflicted with a cataract not present in the earlier portrait. The harsh aging hints at Yinti's demotion after he was implicated in a plot against his brother, who assumed the throne as the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35). Yinti remained under virtual house arrest until his rank was restored in 1735 by his nephew the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–96).

To create a dazzling effect for the couple's dragon-decorated surcoats, the painter mixed a small amount of mica into the blue pigment. The hardwood couch is inlaid with marble and softened by multiple seat cushions.

psychology, emotional state, or taste distinguishes ancestor likenesses from most other categories of portraiture in either China or the West, and may account for their having been so little studied.

The cultural importance of physiognomy ensures that facial features in ancestor portraits are presented with extreme clarity and attention to idiosyncratic, personal features. There is no universal attempt to idealize faces, although certain physiognomic traits that correspond with favorable characteristics might be emphasized. An exceptionally impressive portrait of Prince Zhuang possesses convincing honesty in the rendering of his face; the figure's oversized ears, deeply furrowed brow, prominent cheekbones, and sunken cheek pouches seem highly individual (fig. 2.2). At the same time, since high cheekbones are desirable in physiognomic terms, this feature is always suspect of having been accentuated by an artist. For example, the cheekbones of the prince featured in the

portrait in figure 2.3 are uncannily similar to Prince Zhuang's. Prominent cheekbones are traditionally interpreted as a sign of high authority because the word in Chinese for cheekbone, *quan*, is a homonym with another word that means power (*quan*).

Strongly idealized faces rarely appear in ancestor portraits but under some circumstances are tolerated, such as when an ancestor is far removed in time from the descendants (a situation discussed in chapter 4). Another exception relates to women

who were painted before reaching old age. In the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), younger women in elite and court society often wore heavy, opaque white makeup that may have contributed to a masklike impersonality for them. The white powder was so thick that it concealed not only blemishes but also small idiosyncrasies, resulting in an idealizing uniformity among women. The face of the nineteenth-century empress in figure 11 illustrates how the makeup could be applied so that its effect was almost as obscuring as a white veil.

Beyond the role of cosmetics, another reason some women seem to resemble idealized beauties results from a practice of sequestering women from unrelated men. If a woman's features did not seem personalized, then no one could accuse the male artist (the default gender of professional painters) of having improperly gazed upon her face. Yet, such idealization is at odds with the ritual imperative of ancestor portraits that demands verisimilitude; therefore, the rules were frequently bent, and women, especially older ones, were often painted in memorial images with a view toward realistic description.

Portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun, and Wife (fig. 2.3) exemplifies how far the styles for portraying men and women could diverge, and in the contrast between husband and wife offers an example of why strongly idealized women's faces were less than appropriate for ancestor portraits despite the social pressure to keep women out of the public eye. In fact, given the degree of idealization for the woman, this portrait may have been intended for lifetime commemoration. While all the details of the prince's rugged face have been closely observed, his wife resembles a porcelain doll, which would make any sacrifices directed to her seem unsettlingly impersonal. It was only in portraying their clothing that an equal standard of realism was applied. Comparison between the dragon roundels on their chests and an actual example of eighteenth-century embroidery indicates the painstaking efforts taken to describe badges of rank (fig. 2.4).

In theory, figures in ancestor portraits are always pictured in their finest, most formal clothing, which if they held high rank meant court dress. Each garment and accessory is encoded with symbols that signify wealth and social standing, which accounts for the care used to depict the costumes. The most elaborate clothing commoners ever owned was wedding dress, which often consisted of garments with motifs ordinarily restricted to officials and the nobility. The clothes worn by the figures in the portrait in figure 2.5 are most probably wedding attire. It is especially easy to spot wedding clothes in the case of women in the Qing because brides invariably wore red.

In ancestor portraits of men, shoes and hands are routinely visible, but only a few, conventionalized hand gestures are permitted. In portraits from the Ming period (1368–1644) as well as afterward, the sitter either places both hands on his thighs or, more commonly, reaches for his belt with one hand (fig. 2.6). In the Qing dynasty new alternatives in the repertoire included stroking a coat button or fingering the status symbol of a court necklace with one hand held at chest level (see fig. 2.2). By the nineteenth century, this last gesture had become extraordinarily popular because of its association with honor and rank. If the subject of a portrait was not entitled by official position to wear a court necklace, he might be depicted fingering the air as if grasping an invisible jeweled chain (see fig. 7.2). Two other, less frequently encountered hand

2.4

Dragon roundel
Qing dynasty, 1st half 18th century
Embroidery; silk and metallic threads
on silk; diameter, 29 cm
Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson
Photograph by Charles Rumph

Circular badges were signs of imperial rank; in contrast, officials in the civil and military services wore square insignias. The vigorous spirit of this dragon in close pursuit of a flaming pearl is typical of the energetic designs of badges made in the Yongzheng reign (1723–35). An especially sensitive use of color shading, as well as the inclusion of pinks and mauve in the palette also support this date. This roundel is meticulously embroidered with a variety of stitches, including satin stitch, couching, and tiny knots for the dragon's claws, but what is truly exceptional is the density of the stitching, which completely covers the background.

2.5

Group portrait

Republic period, ca. 1943

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper; image only, 232.1 x 103.5 cm

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Wilmerding, ELS2001.2.20

This twentieth-century painting seems at first glance to be a typical multigenerational ancestor portrait: men and women dressed in Qing formal attire are arrayed in an ascending hierarchy, with the most recent generation on the bottom and the most senior ancestor at the top. An altar table laid out with eight spirit tablets that correspond to the individuals appears behind them, but the portrait is unusual for illustrating one man without a wife. It is notable that this painting dates to about 1943, demonstrating the enduring tradition of ancestor portraits.

Each of the spirit tablets bears a stylized version of the word "longevity" at the top, which alludes to the close association in Chinese thought between life, death, and the continued presence of ancestors in family life. Typically, a red tablet designated a man and a green one, a woman. Here, because the family grouping is unusual, the color code has broken down.

*Portrait of Father Zhang Jimin and
Mother Zhao*

Ming dynasty, 17th century, or later copy

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 143.2 x 105.8 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of Richard G.

Pritzlaff, 51991.73

Double portraits of a couple seated in front of an altar table and screen were popular in the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when this portrait was probably executed. While most details in the painting support a seventeenth-century date, a few anomalies, such as the awkward rendering of the screen, which is somewhere in between a solid panel and a three-panel folding screen, raise suspicion that the painting may be a copy. Moreover, while it is a typical gesture in Ming portraits for a man to finger his belt, in this painting the belt seems to end in the sitter's hand instead of continuing around his waist. It is impossible to determine if these awkward details are due to a painter's incompetence or are signs of recopying.

The man wears a hat that was popular in Ming China but fell out of fashion by the end of the dynasty. A similar-looking headdress remained popular in Korea for a much longer time, which has led many modern viewers to incorrectly attribute such Chinese portraits to Korea. The carpet pattern in the Sackler's painting corresponds closely with known Ming-period rugs, and details such as a cloth skirt wrapped around the altar table offer informative glimpses of Ming décor.

The tablets on the table provide the family surname of Zhang. The central tablet is for the grandfather's generation, and both the grandfather's name and his wife's maiden name are written out. The spirit tablet behind the male sitter in the portrait provides his name as "father Jimin," while the one behind the woman designates her as "mother" and provides her maiden name.

motions include stroking a long, wispy beard or holding a folding fan, a gesture not seen before the nineteenth century.

Female forebears are depicted in demure poses, typically hiding both their hands and feet. On occasion, their fingertips may be visible, especially in the case of a woman of rank who touches her court necklace. The rare exceptions when a woman's feet are visible are discussed in chapter 7, "Innovation within Tradition."

Since ancestors were always shown seated, chairs assume special significance in memorial portraits. In the late Ming dynasty, a roundbacked chair covered with an elaborate silk brocade or an animal pelt, a seat of honor, is the most common type of chair depicted in ancestor portraits (fig. 2.7). Variations include elaborate throne-type chairs (fig. 2.8).

Aside from the chair, the setting in an ancestor portrait is often blank, to focus attention on the sitter, though a carpet, table, or screen may be present. Spirit tablets and altar furnishings (incense burner and paired candlesticks and vases) may also be displayed on a table (see fig. 2.6). These furnishings do not usually represent actual possessions of the sitter, but rather are chosen from an artist's stock repertoire of motifs that can be used to make a portrait seem more lavish. Artistic creativity was tightly constrained in ancestor portraits, so the props constitute a fairly limited group of objects combined over and over again in standard variations.

When background elements were included, artists avoided making the setting appear realistic, so as not to imply the presence of the ancestor in the physical world. A flattened, shallow picture plane better hints at the forebear's supramundane status. If a carpet is present, it is typically painted parallel to the picture plane, much like a panel of wallpaper. This technique compresses the pictorial space by compromising the illusion of a receding ground plane (see figs. 2.1, 2.2). But in the eighteenth century, when the conquest of illusionistic, three-dimensional space became a significant goal in court painting, a new style infiltrated some memorial portraits. Some artists began to paint carpets so that they seemed to recede in space, while others continued the old style. Sometimes two systems of perspective were combined in a single image. The main field of a carpet might seem to recede, but at the same time the border of the carpet has been painted parallel to the picture plane (see fig. 5.8). This effect follows the fashionable new trend without altogether surrendering the conceit of space in an ancestor portrait as being something conceptual instead of physically inhabitable.

Standards and Variations

Most of the portraits in the Sackler's collection depict members of the social and political elite, but the vernacular portraits of an elderly couple with furrowed brows (see fig. 4.10) and a pair of portraits of a toothless husband and wife (see figs. 7.4, 7.5) show that the same general conventions were followed along the continuum of the social scale. At the same time, even within the strongly conventionalized language of ancestor portraits, there was room for a surprising variety of types. Deviations occur most often in the more modest ancestor portraits, perhaps because poorer people could only commis-

2.7

Roundbacked, folding armchair
Ming dynasty, ca. 1600
Huanghuali wood, silver inlay, canvas;
101.6 x 68.6 x 44.9 cm
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas
City, Missouri; purchase: Nelson-Trust, 68.1
Photograph by Robert Newcombe

The roundbacked, folding armchair possessed special status in the Ming and Qing dynasties, with a long tradition as a seat of honor. Despite the exceedingly high quality of the decorative carving, for a formal occasion the chair would have been covered with a brocade cloth or animal skin like those seen in ancestor portrait paintings.

2.8

Throne
Qing dynasty, Qianlong reign (1736–96)
Lacquer over wood, cane seat;
142 x 122 x 90 cm
Private collection
Photograph courtesy of the collector

This throne exemplifies palace taste in the second half of the eighteenth century. Its pierced and interlaced scrollwork resembles archaic dragons and the painted motifs include clouds, a stylized version of the word “longevity,” and auspicious animals such as dragons and bats.

According to tradition, this chair was presented to a prince by the Qianlong emperor. While not verifiable, the anecdote no doubt arises from a historical practice. When traveling, the emperor typically sent a throne ahead to a location he would visit so he would not sit in a chair used by someone else. Princes were eager to receive thrones as imperial gifts, but whether they did or not, thronelike seats were a popular prop in ancestor portraits.

sion one portrait in their lifetime or after several generations, and those portraits had to serve multiple functions. The wealthy commissioned an array of portraits to suit all occasions.

Humble ancestor portraits frequently include symbols of good fortune, which are much less common in better-quality portraits. In one modest, late-nineteenth-century ancestor portrait, several generations of a family sit lined up in chairs in the standard manner, but, unconventionally, a boy stands in the foreground next to several roosters, holding a chime stone in his hand. The words for “chime” (*qing*) and “rooster” (*ji*) are homonyms for “wishes for auspiciousness” (*qing ji*).⁵

In standard practice, ancestor portraits are made as pairs of scrolls with a husband and wife each portrayed individually. Sometimes several scrolls belong to a family set, each one depicting a member of a different generation. The paintings are clearly linked, sharing the same dimensions and having been mounted with the same silk fabrics; moreover, the depiction of matching chairs, chair covers, and carpets also visually connects the portraits. For examples of pairs, see the husbands and wives in figures 2 and 3, 6.7 and 6.8, and 7.4 and 7.5. For three generations of one family, see figures 4.5–4.7. When the paintings are hung together near an altar, these unified displays create an impression of harmonious family solidarity.

Most single ancestor portraits encountered today in museums or on the art market originally belonged to such pairs or larger sets.⁶ In hanging the images on the wall, according to tradition the man’s portrait was placed in the most honored position, to the east of his wife’s. In other words, when you face two portraits hanging side by side, the man’s always appears on the right. If a man had several consorts, the women could be grouped together in one composition or painted on individual scrolls. If they were portrayed individually, the man’s portrait was hung in the center, with the image of his principal wife to the east.

Images of a husband sitting next to his wife or multiple consorts in a single scroll are also fairly common, especially in the Ming, but were never as popular as single images and became less so in the Qing.⁷ In some conservative areas, however, the double portrait continued to be produced well into the twentieth century (see fig. 4.10).

2.9

Multigenerational portrait of women
Probably from Shanxi Province
Qing dynasty, 19th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on cotton;
245 x 218 cm
Collection of William Lipton, Ltd.,
New York
Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor,
New York, courtesy William Lipton, Ltd.

This scroll is one of a pair with a painting that portrays the women's husbands. The scroll with the men is inscribed with an enigmatic text that includes the date 1708. Perhaps portraits made in that year served as models.

Typical of many large multigenerational paintings, the figures are illustrated inside of a building, which can be interpreted as a clan or ancestor hall. A charming detail is the inclusion of a row of ancestors feted at a banquet table set with the ritual offerings of a pig's head, a duck, and a fish.

Usually the man's chair is positioned just slightly forward of his wife's. Some ancestor portraits, especially double images in a Ming-style painting such as *Portrait of Father Zhang Jimin and Mother Zhao* (see fig. 2.6), also include attendants behind the main figures.⁸

Another schema frequently encountered in ancestor portraits is a multigenerational tableau, most frequently consisting of five or fewer generations (see fig. 2.5). Typically in these portraits husbands and wives sit side by side; if a man has multiple consorts he appears above and behind the women. Some multigenerational ancestor portraits are created as pairs, with the women depicted on one scroll and the men on another. Multigenerational portraits tend to be relatively modest, low-cost productions.

In some cases, however, the number of descendants can swell to an almost uncountable total (fig. 2.9). Large portraits of hundreds of figures were popular in north China, especially in Shanxi Province, where cotton cloth was typically employed for the painting ground instead of the usual paper or silk used elsewhere.⁹ Many of the

regional portraits from Shanxi, as well as some from other areas such as Shandong, conflate the traditional ancestor portrait with a clan genealogy.¹⁰

In a typical, large Shanxi portrait a couple who represent the founding ancestors (*shi zu*) will appear at the top of the scroll. They are invariably dressed in Ming-style clothing and shown full-length, seated in roundbacked chairs; on some paintings the words “*shi zu*” can be seen written on their robes.¹¹ The founding ancestors’ surnames without given names are usually written clearly. In most of the Shanxi-type portraits overlapping rows of descendants appear below the founding ancestors, who are usually bust-length images identified by their given names only. They wear Qing robes with their names written on the collars. If some ancestors held official degrees, this, too, was written alongside the name. In some portraits, names are written instead on nearby spirit tablets. Often below the figures, additional rows of spirit tablets are depicted. Many are blank, awaiting the names of future generations. Often the huge multigenerational portraits depict the figures inside an ancestral hall with food offerings laid out in front of the ancestors; in some elaborate portraits the courtyard outside the ancestor hall is also illustrated. In actuality, few northern clans owned ancestor halls, so the paintings record what must have been an ideal.

Commissioning any type of ancestor portrait was beyond the means of some families, but by Qing times the practice of owning family images was so widespread that even the poor wanted to display them at the annual sacrifices. One solution was to buy inexpensive woodblock images. In these prints, a generic-looking couple appears seated by a table that holds an ancestor tablet inscribed “three generations.” The words allude to the three generations that commoners were permitted to worship (see chapter 1). The ancestors’ faces were of course not individualized, but at least the prints could fill a symbolic function.

Discussion up to this point has focused on some of the standard variations frequently encountered in the genre of ancestor portraits. A close look at some of these portraits can also reveal evidence of exceptional family circumstances. The twentieth-century, multigenerational portrait in figure 2.5 is an example. Atypically, the surname of the focal male ancestor is not written on his spirit tablet on the table; however, his wife’s surname appears on her tablet, which is placed in a ritually higher position than his.¹² This man may be what is popularly called an “adopted husband.” A couple without a male heir may “invite in” a husband for their daughter, with the understanding that one or all of his sons will bear the wife’s surname and become part of her descent line.¹³ In this portrait, the most distant male ancestor sits between two women just slightly below him. These were both his wives, but according to the data on the spirit tablet, his first wife died at the age of twenty-one (on the viewer’s right); the older looking woman should be his second wife.

The lineup of the remaining five figures in the painting is extremely unusual because one man is shown without a mate. It would seem that he did not have an heir; therefore, the couple below him may represent a collateral family line that assumed the responsibility of performing the family sacrifices. The generational place markers written on the spirit tablets are also not a coherent group, reinforcing the probability that the family succession was not passed down along a continuous line of descent. Some

family stories are so complicated that once an ancestor portrait is removed from its original context, the full account can never be reconstructed.

Another variable factor in ancestor portraits is whether they are inscribed. The expectation of exacting verisimilitude for ancestor portraits and their use in a closed family context rendered identifying inscriptions unnecessary, but encomiums with the subject's name, rank, birth and death dates, and a career synopsis were desirable.¹⁴ Because inscriptions were often removed before the modern sale of a portrait, it is difficult to assess accurately the actual popularity of inscriptions.

Modest portraits, especially of the multigenerational type, often display written identifications of the sitters in the form of spirit tablets. If the ancestors have been painted with a less-than-convincing degree of accuracy, identifying text on the tablet insured that family sacrifices were directed to the correct person. Tablets usually include the deceased's name, often prefaced by an honorific, such as "revered father or mother," and a generational place marker. For wives, the maiden surname is provided. Spirit tablets record birth and death dates, sometimes including the hours of those events. In some cases, a spirit tablet names an ancestor of a previous generation not depicted in the portrait; for example, the elaborately decorated central tablet in *Portrait of Father Zhang Jimin and Mother Zhao* (see fig. 2.6) is inscribed with the names of the man's grandparents, while the flanking tablets represent the couple in the portrait.

Bust- and Half-Length Portraits

Forward facing or slightly turned, bust-length portraits of formally dressed men and women constitute a category of painting closely allied with ancestor portraits. Busts may have sometimes been used in ancestor rituals, but after the mid-Ming period, full-length, strictly frontal images became the norm. Formal bust portraits did, however, continue to have some importance, especially as illustrations for family genealogies, which were almost always albums. An example in the Freer Gallery of Art, which was originally an album and is now mounted as a handscroll, records a family tree of forty-five generations of the Li family (fig. 2.10). This list of names is accompanied by bust portraits of nine of the most illustrious men.

2.10

Detail, *Genealogy of the Li Family*

Late Ming or Qing dynasty,

17th–19th century

Album mounted as handscroll; ink and color on paper; image only, 32.5 x 248.0 cm

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1911.236

Bust-length portraits were popular for genealogies, and while the en face pose was favored, a three-quarter view was also acceptable. This scroll is extremely abraded, presumably from heavy use.

2.11

Detail, *Bower for Welcoming the Green (Laiqing)* from the *Nancun Retreat*
by Du Qiong (1396–1474), 1443

One of ten album leaves; ink and color
on paper; 33.3 x 50.9 cm

Shanghai Museum

Photograph courtesy Shanghai Museum

This scene shows a garden building with a bust-length portrait of a formally dressed official on casual display. The man with his back to the building is probably the garden owner, but his identity is unknown.

When formal bust-length images appear mounted in the hanging scroll format, it is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of the portrait. The format implies that the scroll was created for public exhibition, but whether that also implies some association with memorial veneration—even if on a fairly informal level—is still unclear. Evidence indicates that as late as the Ming at least some bust-length portraits were commissioned just before the deceased’s funeral, but whether they were used for postburial rites is uncertain. In the seventeenth-century novel *Jinpingmei* (Plum in the golden vase; also translated as *Golden lotus*), the protagonist commissions both a full-length and a bust-length portrait of the deceased before the funeral service. The text mentions that funerary offerings were made in front of “the portrait” without specifying which portrait was meant.

Apparently at least some formal, forward-facing bust-length portraits were used in casual situations. This is indicated by the incidental nature of portrait display that is seen in two Ming dynasty paintings of literati garden estates, in which formal busts of men in official attire are displayed in the background. In one of these garden paintings, an album by Du Qiong (1396–1474), a formal bust portrait appears as a small detail on the back wall of a pavilion (fig. 2.11).¹⁵ An elaborate table appears beneath the painting, but its surface is empty, without even an incense burner—the most basic ritual appurtenance—thus suggesting the display was not for memorial veneration. Perhaps this portrait had been displayed out of a sense of family pride for a beloved, venerable relative. Or perhaps its meaning is something altogether different; maybe it represents a portrait of the garden owner himself wearing an official’s cap and robes before retire-

ment. In that case, the portrait might have been intended as a comment on the garden owner's rejection of government service in favor of becoming a recluse. At present we can only observe that formal busts were in common currency in the Ming, but it is not always possible to reconstruct what meaning they originally carried. They certainly were considered less formal than a full-length, seated portrait.

Half-length portraits were also circulated and displayed during people's lifetimes, as the likeness of Chunying, Prince Rui, in the Sackler's collection demonstrates (see fig. 6.2). The prince looks cheerfully out at the spectator while fingering a Buddhist rosary—a gesture perhaps signifying his embrace of the metaphysical world beyond court politics. Yet, he also deliberately chose to be depicted in a bright yellow jacket identifiable as an imperially granted perquisite. Chunying had himself represented at the height of his success at the court, but, as the rosary hints, he did not want to seem overly ambitious and without spiritual values. The painting is rather stiff and formal, much like an ancestor portrait, but in comparison to a true memorial image it is much more candid. The portrait seems to invite dialogue with the prince, an offer that his contemporaries obviously picked up by inscribing the portrait with their thoughts about the prince (see translations in appendix 2).

The Ancestor Pose Secularized

The distinctive nature of a typical ancestor portrait comes into sharp focus when compared with other types of likenesses, which exist along a continuum from formal to relaxed scenes. Formal images often employ several of the same conventions used in ancestor portraits, including placing the subject at the center of the composition or using an en face pose. By the eighteenth century, the boundary between iconic ancestor portraits and lifetime commemorative images was collapsing to an unprecedented degree. The severe frontal pose was becoming common in secular contexts, and sometimes the overlap with ancestor portraits is strong enough that the original intention of a portrait is undecipherable. In general, however, unless all of the conventions for a memorial portrait are followed, it should be assumed that the painting was not made for ritual veneration; at least not at the level of formal ancestor rites.

One example is the category of standing, full-length figures. Here the standing posture signals that the original purpose of the portrait was not as a memorial image. Standing figures typically assume a pose that implies imminent motion, and by animating or potentially animating the figure, the painter situates the subject in the everyday world. The sense of psychological distance between the spectator and the portrait's subject that characterizes an ancestor image vanishes when motion, which is implicitly tied to temporality, is introduced.

That artists working at the Qing court understood the effectiveness of using a standing pose to commemorate men in the fullness of life is demonstrated by the imposing likeness of the Imperial Guard Uksiltu (fig. 2.12).¹⁶ This painting belongs to a set commissioned in 1760 by the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–96), who ordered court artists to compose one hundred full-length, standing portraits of worthy officials and valiant soldiers for display in the Ziguangge (Hall of imperial brilliance), and the

Portrait of Imperial Guard Uksiltu

Qing dynasty, 1760

Inscription with signatures of Liu Tongxun (1700–1773), Liu Lun (1711–1773), and Yu Minzhong (1714–1780); one seal of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–96); see appendix 2 for translation.

Title slip in Chinese: Number twenty-nine in the second set of fifty meritorious officials in the Ziguangge [who] pacified the western regions

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 186.7 x 96.5 cm

Collection of Dora Wong, ELS2001.2.21

The bilingual inscription in Manchu and Chinese on this painting places it among the second set of fifty such portraits commissioned by the Qianlong emperor to commemorate the Qing conquest of the Tarim Basin. The Ziguangge referred to in the outer label was a hall on the west bank of Central Lake that became a monument to the Turkestan campaigns (see chapter 5, “Portraits at the Qing Court”). The pose, with its implied motion, alludes to Uksiltu’s ever-vigilant martial vigor and strikes a distinctly different note than would be appropriate for an ancestor portrait.

Portrait of Yinli, Prince Guo (1697–1738)
by Mangguri (1672–1736)

Qing dynasty, 1731

Inscription: see chapter 6 for translation

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 158.8 x 88.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
Collections Acquisitions Program and partial
gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.95

This elegant, informal portrait of Yinli, Prince Guo, is capped by a poem written by the prince. He is seated in a beautifully appointed study with auspicious symbols such as a *ruyi* scepter (which symbolizes “may you have what you wish”) in the brushpot on the table. A planter contains narcissus and the *lingzhi* plant, which literally means “sacred fungus” and is associated with wishes for immortality.

The painter Mangguri was a bannerman who had a long and successful official career, during which he was ordered to paint a portrait of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722) and perhaps as a reward was transferred in 1724 from the Mongol Plain Blue to the Manchu Bordered Yellow banner rolls. It is certain that Mangguri painted the figure of the prince, but he sometimes collaborated with other artists to paint the background, which may be the case here. The furniture was depicted by someone accustomed to detail—the table is shown to be made of a dark hardwood, perhaps *zitan*, but it has a black-lacquered top, which was a short-lived furniture fashion in the eighteenth century.

paintings were ordered as a collaboration between European Jesuit artists in residence at the Chinese court and Chinese painters. Banquets to celebrate the emperor's victorious military campaigns were staged in an open field below this building (see chapter 6).¹⁷ In the portrait, Uksiltu is poised to spring into action with his bow, but he holds himself in check, balancing decorum and valorous action. The face is rendered in a European-inspired style with layers of color washes that model his features in full, almost tactile relief.

In contrast to the military guards, the civil officials in this set of imperial portraits pose without a hint of motion. They stand tall, face forward, and in dress and manner are invested with a ceremonial pomp and formal dignity that rivals the language of ancestor portraits; nonetheless, the overall effect is profoundly different. Because of the standing posture, these frontal portraits are recognized as commemorations of men in their prime, intended to be displayed while they were alive.

Portraits of seated figures can be more problematic to our understanding of their original intent, although many examples that incorporate the forward pose are unambiguously lifetime commemorations. A lyrical portrait of Prince Guo by Mangguri (1672–1736) in the Sackler's collection seems clear as a projection of personal identity created as an image for the prince himself or for close friends to enjoy during his lifetime.¹⁸ A comparison between this image and the ancestor portraits in this book helps illustrate the gulf between memorial images and life portraits, while also drawing attention to the everyday fashion of the frontal pose (fig. 2.13).

Given the number of his extant portraits, Prince Guo apparently enjoyed having himself painted. One anonymous portrait portrays him just before he turned twenty, and three portraits by Mangguri document his appearance at midlife.¹⁹ Mangguri's portraits help construct for him a persona as someone modest, erudite, and introspective (see chapter 6, "The Identity of the Sitters," for a translation of Prince Guo's inscription that reflects these characteristics).

In the Sackler's portrait, the prince assumes the forward-facing pose characteristic to ancestor portraits, but in every other respect the painting diverges from the ancestor type. The prince's crossed-leg pose is emphatically informal, suggesting a casual moment. He wears plain clothing without any hint of his rank, instead of the court dress that was *de rigueur* in ancestor portraits. An ancient jade garment hook reveals his antiquarian interests, a personal detail unlikely to appear in an ancestor portrait. Pieces of furniture in the background are placed at right angles to each other to create an illusion of habitable space, an impression furthered by the presence of a planter in front of the daybed, which deepens the space by creating a foreground area. This realistic treatment of the room and its furnishings contrasts with the schema used in ancestor portraits to draw attention to the otherworldliness of the subjects.

Several other portraits in the Sackler's collection that were not intended to serve as ancestor portraits also present the sitter in the ennobling, *en face* pose. In *Portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun* (fig. 2.14) the sitter boldly looks at the viewer. His thoughts, probably written in his own hand, are transcribed above the painting (see appendix 2 for a translation). Yinti sits on a cloud-patterned rug, presumably a cover laid atop a *kang* (a built-in, heated platform typical in northern Chinese homes). The pose of sitting with legs

Portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun (1688–1755)

Qing dynasty, 18th century

Inscription: see appendix 2 for translation

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 172.4 x 113.0 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian

Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.87

This description of Yinti is intensely individualized and his facial features seem almost palpable—the result of building them up by applying layers of graduated color washes.

The wooden pole behind Yinti represents a wooden staff of the type favored by scholars and associated with high-minded men in rustic seclusion. Yinti was enmeshed in court politics his whole life, but as this poem presumably composed by him indicates, he enjoyed lofty thoughts of himself in communion with men of the Way (see appendix 2). The poem, however, is not signed.

形色天性流行
古今身體髮膚
罔敢弗欽德合
矩度律中元音
渾然道貌不愧
影衾然無顯非
隱無淺非深人
第見氣宇清和
曰式如玉式如
金而不知默與
天通者滿腔子
惻隱之心

Portrait of Yinxiang, Prince Yi (1686–1730)

Looking through a Window

Qing dynasty, 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 143.5 x 72.5 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.64

The artist's repetition of curves—in the half-moon window, the round back of the chair, and the exaggerated folds of the brocade chair cover—is striking. Even the prince's arms are resting in a position rounded at the elbows. All these curves contribute to a sense of informality that offsets the stiff frontal pose. The placement of the figure off center further enlivens the composition.

The slight asymmetry of the prince's face (especially obvious in the eyebrows and lopsided mustache), the prominent nose, and unusually pronounced ears with bumps seem rigorously realistic, without any efforts at flattery. The prince's porcelain belt-buckle, which is unusual, may be intended as a reflection of his personal likes and dislikes. Yinxiang was a supervisor of palace workshops, including the one for porcelain.

Another portrait in the Sackler's collection that is supposed to be the same individual is presented as a formal ancestor portrait (see fig. 4.5). Differences more significant than age make a reconciliation between these two portraits difficult. But the portrait illustrated in chapter 4 was painted long after the Yinxiang's death and may not have been intended to be veristic.

crossed without a chair stirs up associations in the viewer's mind with a long tradition of images that present cultured men in introspective moods in this guise, but most notably Yinti's father, the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1622–1722), had himself portrayed in a similar pose. The punctiliously realistic rendering of Yinti's face, including unevenly pigmented skin, is as exacting as would be expected in a memorial image, but the relaxed pose indicates that this was not the intention behind this portrait. When this painting is compared to the later image of him as an older man in *Portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun, and Wife* (see fig. 2.3), the handiwork of age is evident in the cataract that clouds Yinti's right eye. The unsparing detail in both portraits reveals the contemporary Qing taste for realism. Widespread use of ancestor portraits in society may have contributed to a fashion for pictorial fidelity as a standard mode of portraiture in general.

Portrait of Yinxiang Looking through a Window (fig. 2.15) is another commemorative portrait that borrows heavily from the conventions associated with ancestor portraits but surely was not created as a memorial image. The prince is seated in a stiff, frontal pose wearing elaborate clothing—a robe with a thick fur collar and a dragon design that attests to his noble birth and wealth. Without a surcoat, the clothing is too informal as a choice for a portrait intended for memorial veneration. The composition itself violates the cardinal rule that the subject of an ancestor portrait should be situated at the midpoint of the painting. Here the asymmetrical frame of a moon-shaped window distorts the standard geometric rules of formal portraiture. The window narrows near the top using Western-style perspectival drawing, which by introducing a three-dimensional space situates the prince in the world of the here and now and renders the image inappropriate for display over an altar.

One well-known type of image combines the iconic pose with festive imagery suitable for a birthday or anniversary celebration. An example of this type is *Nobleman and Wife in a Garden Pavilion* (fig. 2.16). The two sitters wear court dress and sit in round-backed chairs positioned in the middle of the picture plane. Conventional motifs to signify good fortune surround them. Deer, cranes, and a pine tree express wishes for long life. Even the palette with its strong accents of auspicious red reinforces a mood appropriate to a lively celebration. It is not possible to know if this painting was commissioned by filial children, whether it was hung for a birthday, anniversary, or perhaps used after the couple's death for some level of memorial veneration. *Nobleman and Wife* returns attention to the question asked at the beginning of this chapter. If a painting capitalizes on many of the stylistic conventions of an ancestor portrait, but mixes in other elements, can it be called an ancestor portrait? We may conclude that this is not an ancestor portrait but demonstrates how deeply they influenced the development of other types of likenesses in Qing society.

A final example draws attention to an even more ambiguous case; without an inscription on this portrait, its original function never could have been ascertained. *Portrait of Yinghe* (see fig. 6.1), in the Sackler's collection, exhibits all the standard elements of an ancestor portrait. The items displayed on the table are slightly more personal than the norm in ancestor portraits, but the minimal background setting is consistent with the standards for ancestor portraits. The sitter is attired in formal court robes and poses stiffly, facing forward and staring out at the viewer.

The superscription announces Yinghe's intention to the viewer. He writes that he invited a professional painter to visit his garden in 1806 to commemorate the occasion of his thirty-sixth birthday (see chapter 6). Why did Yinghe choose such a formal image for this occasion? Was he worried that if he died suddenly the family would be left without a proper image to use as a model for an ancestor portrait? Perhaps, thinking beyond the bounds of the memorial tradition, he affected this level of rigid formality to ennoble himself by evoking the dignity and implied authority associated with the ancestor pose.

Although such questions require more research, it is abundantly clear that during the eighteenth century the iconic pose became a statement of personal power and not just an indication of an ancestor's supramundane status. While the formidable forward pose so revealing of outer appearance continued to be the hallmark of ancestor portraits, it had come to be accepted in a much wider sphere. •

2.16

Portrait of Nobleman and Wife in a Garden Pavilion

Qing dynasty, 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 108.5 x 75.3 cm

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto;

George Crofts Collection, 921.1.154

Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum,
©ROM

This portrait was probably created to celebrate an occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, or the Chinese New Year, but the pose and formal dress of the couple would also be appropriate for an ancestor portrait (though the setting indicates this was not the intended purpose of this image). The sitters' erudition is implied by the books and scrolls on the table, while the cranes, deer, and pine augur longevity.

In this painting, husband and wife are rendered together as a double image. But many similar compositions were created as a pair of matched scrolls with each figure depicted alone in a garden setting. The custom of matching scrolls is another parallel to the tradition of ancestor portraits.

3

Realism and the Iconic Pose

pictorial fidelity to external appearance and use of the iconic pose are two defining characteristics of ancestor portraits. This chapter begins with an examination of the first, including a brief overview of the historical evolution of realism in Chinese portraiture. The main emphasis here is on the face, since Chinese artists have traditionally relied on a highly schematic approach to depicting the human body.¹

The next section of the chapter focuses on the rise of the iconic, forward-facing pose in Chinese art and its implications for understanding imperial and ancestor portraits. This is followed by an investigation into some Western perceptions of ancestor portraits, especially in relation to the iconic pose. Modern European and American reactions to this convention have led to some conclusions about the degree of realism in Chinese ancestor portraits that diverge from the Chinese position.

The rise of human representation in Chinese art and culture is closely linked to ancestor worship and mortuary practice. For example, some pottery jars made exclusively for burial use by the Majiayao culture (ca. 3000–2500 B.C.) feature idiosyncratic faces modeled in high relief on the shoulders or mouths of the vessels. These faces were based on potters' stock observations, and while not portraits, the visage on one jar, with its sharply arched eyebrows and slightly askew, half-open mouth attests to an incipient interest in individualized physiognomy (fig. 3.1). In contrast, the figure's body is a schematic stick figure that was crudely painted without any attempt to individualize it.² This striking contrast presages a similar dichotomy in ancestor portraits of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. The development of human representation

in Chinese art did not follow a direct linear path from the prehistoric period to late imperial times; however, as the Majiayao jar demonstrates, there was a long-standing practice in China to treat faces with a far greater degree of individuality than bodies.

With few exceptions individuals in China continued to be depicted in a generalized manner for a long time. A tentative move toward more individualized portraits occurred between the sixth and third century B.C., when linear drawings of figures, which had lagged behind the development of plastic models, achieved considerable sophistication.³ What many scholars consider to be the earliest painted portraits in China are two third-century B.C. funerary banners of a husband and wife (fig. 3.2). The banners, discovered in a tomb from the state of Chu (near modern Changsha, Hunan Province), provide evidence of ancient connections between painted portraiture and memorial traditions.⁴ Originally thought to represent shamans, the profile figures more likely portray the tomb occupants on a spiritual journey.

In the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), portraiture gained in popularity due to the growing influence of Confucianism with its emphasis on human social and ethical values. Portraits were important not only for memorial functions and entombment with the deceased but also for admonitory and didactic functions, closely interwoven with political ideology and social ethics.⁵ The Han elite adorned the walls of their residences and tombs with portraits of meritorious and evil men meant to inspire righteousness and warn against wickedness.⁶

Commentaries written in the Han dynasty suggest that people of the time were impressed that portraiture had reached a high degree of competency and persuasive mimesis. On a theoretical level Han artists were motivated by belief in physiognomy (*xiangshu* or *xiangkan*) to strive for punctilious and convincingly plastic renderings of facial features. The tenet of physiognomy that facial bone structure and pigmentation, especially moles, are correlated with a person's heavenly endowed nature and fate, and the understanding of these features as prognosticators of personal worth and destiny, instilled a desire to achieve accurate descriptions of individuals' faces.⁷

Yet, despite these intentions, extant Han portraits, which mostly come from mortuary contexts, are not even close to modern standards for individualism. In fact, the painted banner from Mawangdui found covering the coffin of the marquise of Dai (died ca. 168 B.C.) bears her profile likeness as a caricature rather than a true portrait (see fig. 1.1). The sumptuously embroidered robe worn by the figure identifies her as the marquise more than anything about her face. Even later in the Han dynasty, tomb portraits continued to rely heavily on the accoutrements of status and social position to establish individual identity.

While mortuary portraiture stayed basically unchanged in the succeeding period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (A.D. 265–581), secular portraiture gained in critical recognition and sophistication. Gu Kaizhi (ca. A.D. 345–ca. 406) and Xie He (active ca. A.D. 500–535), two profoundly important father figures of Chinese painting, brought portraiture and critical theories about the genre to new heights. Gu's description of portraits as *chuanshen xiezhao* (transmitting the spirit through the depiction of outer appearance) alludes to a growing demand that portraits should reveal personality as well as physical likeness, and Gu instructed artists to do this by studying a sitter's pos-

3.1

Pottery jar from Shizhaocun,
Tianshui, Gansu Province
Prehistorical period, Majiayao culture
(ca. 3000–2500 B.C.)

Pottery, pigment; height 21.7 cm
The Institute of Archaeology, CASS, Beijing
Photograph after Xiaoneng Yang, ed., *The
Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology*, no. 9

The modeled clay face on this jar is
surprisingly expressive, and the application
of pinkish slip enhances its lifelike quality.

ture, gestures, and gaze. The belief in a straightforward correspondence between physical appearance and inner nature that had dominated Han thinking about portraiture was becoming more nuanced as artists sought to place more emphasis on actively conveying a subject's personality. Xie He's comment that if artists "were to explore painting through spirit resonance, then inevitably formal likeness would reside in it" records a shifting paradigm.⁸ In the fifth and sixth centuries it had become fashionable to attempt to capture the ineffable aspects of personal identity first, and then trust that fidelity to outward appearance would logically follow. This was the beginning of what eventually evolved into a widening gulf between memorial portraits, which remained grounded in beliefs in physiognomy, and other types of commemorative portraits.

Gu Kaizhi's original work no longer exists, but nearly contemporaneous group portraits of a coterie known as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove exemplify the lyrical style associated with his name. These portraits, found in several tombs in the area around Nanjing from the fifth century, depict the Seven Sages—famous philosophers, poets, musicians, and bon vivants who lived in the third century—seated in relaxed poses on the ground beneath tall trees.⁹ The depictions attest that portraiture in Gu's lifetime still relied heavily on stock representations of figure types. In truth, the sages' faces were described with a strong degree of uniformity, but the growing trend in art to convey soul and personality was achieved by endowing each figure with an idiosyncratically expressive pose.

The balance between striving to achieve verisimilitude and expression of personal character shifted in the Tang dynasty (618–906) toward greater emphasis on realism. In the words of Dietrich Seckel, the Tang period was the first time "persons receive their own faces, immediately to be recognized and identified."¹⁰ The most significant advances in faithful mimetic representation occurred first in memorial portrait sculptures of Buddhist abbots and monks, with influence gradually affecting secular portrait traditions in all media.

Exactly realistic sculptures of deceased monks were created to serve as both replications of and substitutes for the dead and were the focus of ceremonial veneration. Some monks left specific instructions for their followers asking to have their desiccated corpses prepared for mummification by lacquering and painting the body to transform it into a lifelike sculpture. The mummified figure of the Chan (Zen) patriarch, Huineng (638–713), preserved in a temple in Guangdong Province, exemplifies this practice that persisted into Qing times.¹¹ More traditional clay and wood sculptures of deceased monks were also intensely realistic, and many were also reliquaries. The deceased's ashes, hair, or other remains were sometimes inserted into a cavity in the back of the image, or the ashes from the cremated body were mixed into the clay.

These developments in Buddhist sculpture occurred in the context of China's long history of memorial images, bringing to a new height the power of realistic portrait effigies as a focus for ritual veneration. The impact of the Tang sculptures no doubt also influenced the history of painting, especially in regard to the rise of sophisticated, veristic portrait scrolls of abbots (*dingxiang*) and monks to be used for memorial veneration (fig. 3.3). These made their debut in the Song dynasty at about the same period that

3.2

Banner with woman, phoenix, and dragon
State of Chu, ca. 3d century B.C.

Banner; ink and color on silk; 37.5 x 28.0 cm
Hunan Provincial Museum

Photograph after *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihuabian—yuanshi shehui zhi Nanbei Chao huihua* (Painting from the prehistoric period to the Northern and Southern Dynasties in the complete compendium of Chinese art) 1 (Beijing: Remin meishu chubanshe, 1986): pl. 43

Some scholars have argued that this banner and the matching one of a man are "name banners," which portray the deceased and were used in funeral rites before being interred in a tomb.

Portrait of the Chan Priest Wuzhun
Southern Song dynasty
Inscription dated 1238
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk
Tōfuku-ji Temple, Kyoto
Photograph from Tōfuku-ji Temple

ancestor portraits gained currency in the Confucian context, and the development of the two traditions seems to have been closely interwoven.

The Song and Yuan Dynasties

Not long after the achievement of brilliantly realistic portraits in Chinese painting, interest in veristic likeness experienced a dramatic decline. Song dynasty literati questioned the value of mimesis, instead praising art as a vehicle to capture that which is beyond formal representation. Championing expressiveness, Su Shi (1037–1101) charged that “If anyone discusses painting in the terms of formal likeness/His understanding is close to that of a child.”¹² The rift between secular and memorial portraiture that began in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, when portraits that captured a nugget of the sitter’s personality were favored over meticulous description of outward appearance, became unbridgeable in the Song dynasty. A comment by Chen Shidao (1053–1101) demonstrates that in the Song period, portraits were divided into two types—those that accurately reproduced physical appearance and those that reflected a person’s mind and spirit. The literati favored the latter, but the former were still required for memorial veneration.

There are portraits of Ou-yang Hsiu [Ouyang Xiu, 1007–1072] both in his own family’s collection and in that of Su Hsün [Su Xun, 1009–1066], which are considered to be correct. Generally speaking, Su’s version is supreme in [spirit] harmony (*yun*) but deficient in formal [likeness] (*xing*), while his own family’s version has formal likeness but is deficient in spirit harmony.¹³

The portrait in Ouyang’s family was probably a stiffly formal image, perhaps explicitly made to serve after his death for ritual veneration.¹⁴ In contrast the portrait circulating outside of the family might have been more informal and placed Ouyang in

3.4
Detail, *Listening to the Zither*
Attributed to Song Huizong (r. 1101–26)
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
147.2 x 51.3 cm
The Palace Museum, Beijing,
People’s Republic of China
Photograph from The Palace Museum,
Beijing

a setting in which the surrounding elements and their style could provide clues to his character. The portrait in Su Xun's house might have employed a schema similar to that used for *Listening to the Zither*, which is said to portray the emperor Song Huizong (reigned 1101–26) strumming the *qin* (fig. 3.4). The viewer identifies with the sense of serenity and deep concentration on the musician's face and feels drawn to the figure's lofty nature; but this expressiveness is neither formal nor detailed enough to serve as a memorial portrait.

Su Shi wrote that portraiture and physiognomy “belong to the same path (*dao*),” but he disdained likenesses of individuals wearing “a formal robe and cap, who sit staring ahead fixating firmly on one object, while assuming a pompous facial expression.”¹⁵ Although Su does not explicitly make the connection, these words seem to describe portraits suited for ancestor worship. Such “robe and cap” (*yiguan*) portraits as they came to be known were routinely scorned by the Song literati, but judging from the rise in popularity of ancestor portraits during the Song, the literati must themselves have been commissioning these images in some quantity. Their writings reveal, however, that simultaneous with an increase in demand, ancestor portraits were being pushed outside of the development of the mainstream of art.

Whereas few highly formal portraits from the Song have survived except for imperial images and likenesses of Chan abbots and monks, these are enough to allow us to visualize the portraits that Su Shi railed against (see figs. 3.3, 3.9). In both cases, a figure is presented full-length, seated on a cloth-draped chair, with his face slightly turned to the side. The sitter's steady, penetrating gaze fixes upon an object outside of the picture, and the facial features are scrupulously modeled with layers of graded washes. In style and setting—chairs draped with sumptuous brocades—these imperial and Chan portraits offer a foretaste of Ming and Qing ancestor portraits, and they presumably reflect what family ancestor images looked like in Song times.

Su Shi's condemnation of static portraits was echoed by Chen Zao, who in about 1190 denigrated formal “robe and cap” portraits by describing them as mere reflections in a mirror.¹⁶ In the same passage he compared the portraits to wooden idols, which could have been a reference to portrait statues used in ancestor veneration. Chen also decried portraitists who were concerned with “capturing every hair,” which referred to the extensive detail in ancestor portraits. Confucian practice maintained that for ritual purposes, “If only one hair [in a portrait] is not correctly rendered, the sacrifice will be for another man, which is most inconvenient.”¹⁷ Chen reserved praise for painters who could transmit a person's spirit by capturing the movement of the eyes and facial organs, a standard that is the exact opposite of what is appropriate for ancestor portraits.

In the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), portraiture continued to rank low in the hierarchy of painting genres. But the many useful functions of formal commemorative portraits—from documenting the visages of members of the imperial family to serving as memorial images of commoners—ensured that portrait painters continued to be trained. One of the important painting texts of the Yuan dynasty is a slim volume called *Xiexiang mijue* (Secrets of portraiture) written by Wang Yi (ca. 1333–1368), who imparts some of the trade secrets of the portraitist.¹⁸ Many of these techniques are still practiced

in modern portrait workshops, some of which have been the subject of recent study in Taiwan.¹⁹

To depict a face, Wang Yi recommended working from the inside out. He painted the nose first, then the eyes and other elements, adding the contour line last. This method encouraged a painter to think in sculptural terms, modeling the nose as an anchor for the face and constructing each additional feature around it, using volumetric line drawing and graded color washes to build up the bone structure in accord with belief in physiognomy. After the Yuan dynasty, painters did not always take the trouble to build a face outward, with the result that later visages often seem flat by comparison, until Western-style chiaroscuro was adopted during the Qing dynasty.

Wang Yi, like many literati before him, derided painters who depicted their subjects sitting “stiffly erect, with garments neatly arranged, like clay statues,” probably another reference to statues of ancestors or images of deities. His work is judged by a portrait that is today in the Palace Museum, Beijing. In this scroll, Wang depicted a man standing in a landscape, which was executed by another painter. The figure has one arm bent as he clutches his walking staff just lifted between steps. The implied motion hints at the figure’s enjoyment walking in nature.

Notwithstanding this sensitive emblematic portrait, most of Wang’s comments in his book are of a technical nature best suited to professional artists working in the tradition of formal portraiture, including religious paintings and memorial images. Wang provides rich details about mixing pigments to create a rainbow of colors useful for depicting clothing and jewelry, and he offers advice on the best coloring to use to depict wooden armchairs—a sure sign that he could have been thinking of the most typical prop in a memorial portrait.

Wang’s text is laden with references to physiognomy and promptings to visualize a face as a cosmic landscape. The forehead, chin, cheeks, and nose represent the Five Sacred Mountains of the universe, and the nasal cavity, eyes, ears, and mouth represent the Four Great Rivers. “Whoever paints a portrait must be thoroughly familiar with the rules of physiognomy, for the disposition of the parts of people’s faces is like that of the Five Mountains and Four Rivers, each element being different. Even if there are symmetrical areas, their expression and color will differ according to the four seasons.”²⁰ Later artists were deeply influenced by Wang Yi.

The Ming and Qing Dynasties

During a long period of prosperity in the sixteenth century, an urbane and commercially vibrant society arose that fostered new social attitudes favoring greater self-awareness and individualism. Interest in “self,” a rising culture of conspicuous consumption, and the availability of more disposable income opened the floodgates to a greater quantity and diversity of portraits than had ever before been produced. The practice of commissioning ancestor portraits also grew rapidly, bringing the genre to its final stages of codification.²¹ Concern with realism once again became a burning issue.

The pursuit of outward fidelity that had been scorned by Song and Yuan painting theorists experienced a gradual renaissance in the Ming, which intensified in the Qing

3.5

Detail, *Ancestor Tablets of Li Zhao and Wife Displayed in a Garden*

Qing dynasty, 1870

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;

image only, 214 x 91 cm

Private collection, Taiwan

Photograph after *Ming Qing guanxianghua tulu* (Catalogue of portrait paintings of figures in official dress of the Ming and Qing dynasties), with a preface by Chen Du-cheng (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan yishu jiaoyu guan, 1998), pl. 152

3.6

Diagram of a face superimposed with cosmological and physiognomic terms
Qing dynasty, 1814 edition of the *Jieziyuan huachuan* (Mustard Seed Garden painting manual)

Woodblock print

Photograph after *Jieziyuan huachuan*,
sec. 4, chap. 1, 3b

Artists learning to paint would have been influenced by diagrams like this to conceptualize faces in terms of the zones indicated here, which are given cosmological names related to categories used in phrenology and physiognomy.

dynasty. It is possible that a surge in the popularity of realistic-style ancestor portraits used in family rituals played a role in influencing a greater acceptance of verisimilitude in portraiture. The brilliant polemicist Jiang Yingke (1556–1605) touches upon Ming attitudes about realism in his essay “Qiu zhen” (Seeking the real) by comparing a theory about realism in poetry to portraiture. His description seems to refer to ancestor portraits.

It [the poetic theory] is comparable to a painter of portraits (*xiezhēn chuānshēn*) who—be his subject’s face beautiful or ugly, dark or light, fat or thin, slanty or straight, smooth or pockmarked—wishes one thing only: to paint a portrait which is totally like, so that when the son sees it, he says, “This is really my father.”... If such things as the facial features, eyes, cheekbones, chin, and so forth are not like, and the artist merely does a mechanical depiction based on the clothes and appurtenances... imitating the ancients in every detail, but missing the appearance of his actual form, then the son will not recognize his father... Such a work could not be considered a likeness, nor could it even be considered a painting!²²

Other Ming and Qing texts and images corroborate this insistence upon verisimilitude in depicting a face. An unusual ancestor portrait dated 1870 illustrates an extreme take on the position that ritual portraits must be realistic to be efficacious (fig. 3.5). This painting was commissioned by a great-grandson who explained in a superscription that he had annually paid homage to a portrait of his forebears that presented them as dignified, formidable figures. However, after that portrait was destroyed during civil unrest, he decided to commission a replacement, but since he had no model of his ancestors to show the artist, he instead asked for a “portrait” of their spirit tablets.²³ The usual recourse would have been to invite a painter to study living relatives and thereby reconstruct the appearance of the deceased. This great-grandson apparently feared that a portrait whose fidelity was compromised could not be effective as a ritual object.

In general practice, however, depending upon several factors, artists might be allowed some leeway in their pursuit of verism. For example, the generational position of an ancestor affected the degree of realism—for distant ancestors less accuracy was required (see chapter 4). The price of a portrait—which is usually correlated with its quality—also affected the results, with inexpensive works generally appearing to be more generic or stereotypical.

Desires to aggrandize one’s forebears and hence a descendant’s own status also sometimes tempered what was meant by realism. In theory, accurate recording of a person’s physical appearance should not have been compromised in order to show favorable physiognomic characteristics, but as already suggested in chapter 2, if features associated with qualities for familial success were present, an artist might emphasize them at the client’s request. If we trust what Ming dynasty fiction reports, an artist could be instructed to ennoble a portrait’s subject and asked to show him with a handsome face and wearing an official’s costume. In the somewhat satirical novel *Xing shi yin yuan zhuan* (Tale of a marriage to awaken the world), a son commissions a portrait of his deceased father. In the ensuing discussion, the painter mentions that he knew the father and was confident he could create an accurate likeness. The son then informs the

painter that to him fidelity is irrelevant; he cares only that his father is made to look impressive and is shown wearing a high-rank official's dress, an honor the father had not earned in life. The finished portrait was said to resemble the God of Literature, a Chinese deity beloved by the literati class who was always presented wearing scholars' attire and possessed of a dignified demeanor with long beard.²⁴ The novel's author crafted this scenario counting on shock value; his readers were expected to believe that an ancestor portrait should be realistic, not exaggerated. But the story signals that the ideal was not always met; as Craig Clunas puts it, there was in Chinese society a tension between "ritual and display."²⁵ If people outside of the family caught sight of a portrait of a noble-looking forebear, they would project that high social standing onto the descendants.

By Ming times, printed charts with faces explaining physiognomic traits were in wide circulation, thus ensuring that artists and patrons were familiar with the standard conventions (fig. 3.6).²⁶ For example, that a perfectly circular earlobe was a symbol of imperial majesty was well known. The Qing conquest leader Dorgon boasts this feature in his portrait (see appendix 1 fig. 31). Presumably, if a painter only needed to exaggerate slightly to endow a sitter with rounded earlobes, he would no doubt do so, feeling assured that his client would be pleased. Ancient rulers were also said to have had deep, round eye sockets (*puyan*, exposed eyes), and that association may account for the special prevalence of this feature in so many Chinese portraits (see fig. 4.1).

Inexpensive portraits were most strongly affected by the popular distribution of physiognomic diagrams because lesser painters often lacked the skill, inclination, or time to produce a truly good semblance of the deceased; instead they relied more heavily than other artists on categorical types as substitutes for strongly individualized faces. In one late-Ming dynasty text on physiognomy, the entire repertoire of human faces was divided into ten stereotypical types, each of which was outlined in a line drawing. These ten faces—all frontal—border on caricatures, but they are easily recognizable as forms frequently encountered in daily life. In better-quality portraits, these schema are only a starting point for an artist who individualizes the model, thus in essence hiding its use.

In humble portraits, however, artists often relied closely on printed models, and the figures in the portraits therefore tend to look alike. Two of the most popular facial types from these physiognomic manuals and charts feature prominent cheekbones, which no doubt refers to the belief that high cheekbones signify authority (see a pun explained in chapter 2).²⁷ The old man's face illustrated in figure 3.7 exemplifies one of these commonly encountered stereotypical faces. The drawing is from a nineteenth-century "book of faces," which is a collection of sketches that portrait painters used to jog the memories of the deceased's descendants. Painters showed the sketches to elicit information helpful in reconstructing the features of an ancestor (see chapter 4).

Iconic Pose

One of the most striking features of Chinese ancestor portraits is their solemn majesty, an impression created by the strict frontality, symmetry, stasis, and compositional cen-

3-7
Page from a sketchbook of faces
Qing dynasty, late 19th–early 20th century
Album page; ink and color on paper;
18.8 x 10.7 cm
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto;
purchased with Royal Ontario Museum
Foundation funds, 994.31.1.40
Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum,
©ROM

This face belongs to one of the ten basic stereotypes for faces. It is called the "shen zi" (a term in cosmology for the ninth terrestrial branch) face. The term does not derive from the meaning of *shen* but from the shape of the character, which is a box with a horizontal line bisecting it and a long vertical axis through the middle that extends above and below the box. The prominent cheeks are the sides of the "box," with the eyes the horizontal line; points connecting the forehead, nose, and chin correspond to the longitudinal line through the character. The dark outlines on the face and chin presumably represent an artist's practice work.

3.8

Detail of a portrait from a tomb
Eastern Jin dynasty, ca. A.D. 300–350
Wall painting from the stone tomb
at Yuantaizi, Chaoyang County,
Liaoning Province
Photograph after *Wenwu* (1984) 6: pl. 5.2

trality of the figures. The dignified, seated pose also contributes to this effect. As discussed in chapter 2, these elements characterize what is called the iconic pose, a device used in many parts of the world to represent deities and transcendent individuals.

In the Warring States period (480–221 B.C.) and early Han dynasty, portraits of the deceased on funerary banners were depicted in profile. Some scholars cite that tradition to argue that a rigidly frontal pose is not indigenous to China. Representing this group, Wu Hung contends that the arrival of Buddhism in China around the first century was the vehicle for the introduction of the frontally oriented pose.²⁸ Indian images of the Buddha portrayed him seated on a dais in a rigidly decorous, frontal pose, the majesty of which inspired worship. Often the Buddha's image was positioned at the center of a group of attendants, and these flanking bodhisattvas, monks, and donor figures were typically shown standing or kneeling, turned slightly to the side.

The new imagery of the iconic pose came to exert strong influence on Chinese artistic practice. Soon after the importation of Buddhism, the conventions for presenting the Chinese deity the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu) began to change. In tomb murals she was portrayed in a new fashion that showed her in a frontal, seated posture, sometimes flanked by attendants, which echoed images of the Buddha.²⁹ As Buddhism took deep root in Chinese society, the iconic pose was gradually adopted for almost all religious deities, whether Buddhist or Daoist.

The iconic pose also made an appearance in the late Han as a device suitable for depicting men of noble stature. Occupants of a tomb were often portrayed in a seated, frontal position during the late Han and the Northern and Southern Dynasties. An example excavated in the 1980s illustrates a powerful tomb occupant in a static pose facing forward, seated beneath a canopy that is a sign of high rank (fig. 3.8). Attendants (not visible in this figure illustration) stand nearby, turned slightly to the side. The man fingers his belt, a gesture that presages one seen in many Ming dynasty ancestor portraits, and perhaps suggests an origin for this habit. From at least Han times belts were symbols of rank.

Some scholars have suggested that a fully frontal orientation for a subject in a painting creates an impression of interaction between the subject and the spectator through implied exchanges of gazes. In contrast, figures in a painting who are turned in a profile or three-quarter view seemingly have withdrawn into their own private space, or seem to interact with others in the composition, making the spectator feel like an outside observer. Zheng Yan has speculated that the sense of connection fostered by the iconic pose encouraged its use in early tomb portraits.³⁰ At most this could have been a contributing factor, since only some tomb murals were painted in chambers available to mourners. Many of these portraits were never seen by the descendants. The iconic pose may have been chosen because of some association with power and status, which was deemed appropriate for an ancestor. Regardless of what viewers in ancient China thought when they encountered the iconic pose, it took a long time for it to become de rigueur in memorial portraiture. As mentioned in chapter 1, tomb occupants in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were still frequently represented turned in a three-quarter view in a portrait.

Ladislav Kesner, Jr., has argued along the same lines as Zheng Yan that once the

iconic pose did become standard in the Ming dynasty, its power was centered in the exchange of “mutual gaze of ancestor and descendant [that is] a means of sustaining and renewing the vital bond between both realms.” By virtue of simultaneously gazing upon one’s ancestor and being the recipient of his or her gaze, communication is established between the parties that “affirms one’s identity within [the] lineage.”³¹

Seductive as the argument may seem, the notion of mutual gaze is problematic.³² The living and dead are not on the same hierarchical level, so it is questionable whether a descendant would openly exchange a direct gaze with his or her forebear. Moreover, ancestor portraits are usually hung high on a wall and the viewer kowtows before the image. It is in the prostrate position that the descendant feels in closest communication with the portrait’s subject.

The unwavering forward stare of an iconically posed ancestor generally is directed above the head of the spectator. If the viewer and the subject in a portrait look at each other, the cold, steady gaze of ancestor is more likely to seem to pierce the viewer without inviting “communication.” The imperturbable, forward gaze reflects the forebear’s dignified otherworldly status. A mutual exchange of gazes does not seem consistent with ritual use of ancestor portraits, at least before the customs changed in the twentieth century and small photographs taken while the sitter was alive came to be displayed close to eye level near an altar.

Some researchers discount the importance of early precedents in seeking to explain the rise of the iconic pose in Ming portraiture. In examining the history of frontality in imperial portraiture, the contemporary art historian Wen Fong links the abandonment of the three-quarter view that was normative in the Song dynasty to the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism at the Yuan court.³³ He postulates that the presence at the Chinese court of the Nepalese artist Anige (1245–1306) had a major effect. Anige was steeped in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhist imagery in which deities were routinely presented in frontal poses. Wen Fong believes that influences from this tradition were carried over into imperial portraiture. Fong’s analysis, however, does not take into account the centuries of experimentation with the frontal pose prior to the Yuan dynasty, including Chinese images of deities. Nor is it supported by the extant Yuan imperial portraits, none of which presents a figure in a rigidly forward pose.

Much the same objection—lack of supporting evidence in surviving portraits—can be made of a radically different theory proposed by the modern scholar Zhang Qiya. Zhang suggests that in the Song dynasty the frontal pose was not only used for imperial portraits but also spread into portraiture created for the elite scholar class and served as a direct precedent for Ming and Qing dynasty ancestor portraits.³⁴ Lack of surviving images makes Zhang’s thesis difficult to prove, and it would seem to be overstated. But literary evidence does back up the claim that at least one Song emperor posed for a frontal portrait.

In 1080, Guo Ruoxu recorded in *An Account of My Experiences in Painting* (Tuhua jianwen zhi) that he had seen a frontal visage of the emperor in a portrait painted by Mou Gu (active in the eleventh century). Guo emphasized the difficulty of painting a convincing frontal likeness.³⁵ It is far easier to achieve a realistic face, frontally posed, in the medium of sculpture than painting, which requires much skillful manipulation and

3.9

Portrait of the Emperor Song Taizu
Song dynasty, 10th century, or later copy
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
191.0 x 169.7 cm
National Palace Museum, Taipei
Photograph from National Palace Museum,
Taipei

3.10

Portrait of Khubilai Khan as the First Yuan Emperor Shizu
Yuan dynasty, 13th century
Album leaf; ink and color on silk;
59.4 x 47.0 cm
National Palace Museum, Taipei
Photograph from National Palace Museum,
Taipei

foreshortening of the facial features to create a convincing illusion. This may partially account for the slow adoption of the frontal pose for painted portraits, whether as imperial or memorial images.

How often the frontal pose was attempted in the Song is not known, but extant, formal portraits of the emperors feature the rulers sitting with a slight turn of face and body. *Portrait of the Emperor Song Taizu* (reigned 960–76; fig. 3.9) exemplifies the type, which finds a parallel in Song dynasty portraits of Chan monks.³⁶ The figures are rendered with a stiff formality that brings to mind the very qualities that the Song literati decried in their discussions of portraiture.

According to Wen Fong, the first major breakthrough in frontal portraiture occurred in the thirteenth century via circulation of Tibetan images at the Yuan court. But in fact the real advance did not occur until the Ming. Fong cites a thirteenth-century portrait of Khubilai Khan, with a “frontal orientation, looking directly out at the viewer” as a turning point in imperial portraiture (fig. 3.10).³⁷ In actuality, however, Khubilai Khan’s face is turned the same number of degrees as Song Taizu’s in the Song dynasty portrait. Frontality was a difficult goal to achieve illusionistically and did not become a standard feature in painting until the mid-Ming.

3.11

Portrait of the Ming Hongzhi Emperor
Ming dynasty, 16th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
209.7 x 155.2 cm
National Palace Museum, Taipei
Photograph from National Palace Museum,
Taipei

3.12

Stove god in front of screen with flowers
of the four seasons
Modern print from original Qing dynasty
woodblocks
Fengxiang County, Shaanxi Province
Ink and color on paper; 23.5 x 18.0 cm
Collection of Po Sung-nien
Photograph after Po Sung-nien and David
Johnson, *Domesticated Deities and
Auspicious Emblems: The Iconography of
Everyday Life in Village China* (Berkeley:
Chinese Popular Culture Project at the
University of California, 1992), 45

In analyzing the change in the Ming to rigorous adherence to the frontal iconic pose, Wen Fong also cites the powerful influence of Tibetan Buddhist art. He argues that the circulation of decorative Tibetan mandalas (cosmic diagrams) at the fifteenth-century Chinese court, where Tibetan prelates were frequent guests, provided an impetus toward a “a new, symmetrically balanced and flatly decorative hieratic composition” for Chinese imperial portraiture.³⁸ The visual formula of Tibetan mandalas worked well for imperial images and is exemplified by the imposingly grand portrait of the Hongzhi emperor (reigned 1488–1506), which established a new imperial style (fig. 3.11). This style of imperial portrait continued into the Qing, and from the eighteenth century there are also examples of the emperor having himself portrayed at the center of a Tibetan mandala (see fig. 5.2).

The Ming court artists, however, also drew on earlier painting traditions when they adopted the iconic pose. Since at least the Han dynasty, the iconic pose had been associated with godlike authority. As Ming government authority became increasingly centralized in the person of the emperor, a desire to draw on supramundane imagery for the imperial visage gained momentum. Wen Fong writes that by the sixteenth century, the emperor had “become a ritual vessel; devoid of personality . . . the ultimate embodiment of the absolutist state” and that a dignified, otherworldly, iconic pose was ideal to communicate that message.³⁹ And Fong rightly asserts that the portrait of Hongzhi became the “model not only for Qing imperial court portraiture but for all later Ming and Qing private ancestral portraits.”⁴⁰

Conceptually, ancestors were visualized almost like deities, and in the pictorial tradition from the mid-Ming onward Chinese ancestors increasingly came to look like gods and vice versa. A late woodblock print of the stove god and his wife is indistinguishable in composition, pose, and dress from a standard ancestor portrait (fig. 3.12). Similarities between this print and the Sackler’s *Portrait of Father Zhang Jimin and Mother Zhao* (see fig. 2.6) are striking, even including the gesture of fingering the wearer’s belt.

The changes in imperial portraiture that occurred in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth century quickly penetrated other levels of society, where a shift toward more strictly frontal portraiture was in fact already being anticipated. A majestic portrait of General Yang Hong (1381–1451) in the Sackler’s collection illustrates a transitional move toward full frontality (fig. 3.13). Datable to around 1451, the portrait employs frontal orientation to an impressive extent, but the general’s posture still is not entirely forward, as would become almost mandatory after 1500 in both court and memorial portraiture.⁴¹

Yang is depicted wearing a formal red robe with a high-ranking military officer’s helmet that was fashioned as a Ming revival of archaic headgear. A raptor feather tucked into the helmet is a symbol of martial valor. His face is barely turned, revealing more of the right ear than of the left, and his hands, hidden inside his sleeves, are shifted slightly to his right, as are his feet. It was not long before this style of portrait yielded to a more rigorously frontal disposition of face and body.

The extreme dichotomy in styles between the treatment of “face” and “body” that characterizes most late Ming and Qing portraits is not yet present in *Portrait of Yang Hong*, and his body is not depicted with the same degree of flatness that was to become

Portrait of Yang Hong (1381–1451)
Ming dynasty, ca. 1451

Inscription by Yu Qian (1398–1457),
dated 1451: see appendix 2 for
translation

Inscription by Xu Yongzhong dated
1558: see appendix 2 for translation
Hanging scroll; ink and color in silk;
image only, 220.8 x 127.5 cm
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
Collections Acquisition Program
and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.77

Yang Hong was a prominent military commander who won honors for his valorous service, and in the inscription Yu Qian describes him as a man with the “intestinal fortitude of iron and stone.” In this portrait, however, he seems to radiate gentle dignity and sagacity more than warlike determination. Yang’s face is outlined with delicate ink lines, some of which are superimposed over the underdrawing in red. Subtly graded color washes in pinkish skin tones model the features. In comparison to the face, the body is somewhat stiff, hidden beneath layers of heavy cloth. But in comparison to later ancestor portraits, the body still has corporeal presence imparted by the volumetric line drawing and vigorous hooked strokes that outline the drapery folds of Yang’s ceremonial attire. Yang wears a rank insignia suspended from his belt on his left and chains of tinkling jade pendants on both sides that touch his hem.

Yang’s male attendants wear garb popular among peoples who originally came from beyond China’s northern border; including the feature of a single pierced earring. The carpet on the floor is painted with even brush strokes, not the stippled dots usually used to represent rugs, and may indicate that the carpet is made of velvet, not wool. The design features roundels with rabbits and the fungus of immortality.

standard in sixteenth-century and later ancestor portraits. The visual formula to depict ancestors was still evolving and had not yet reached the point at which ancestors are portrayed as “ritual vessels, devoid of personality” (to borrow Fong’s words).

Modern Perceptions of Ancestor Portraits

The 1984 French novel *L’Amant* (The lover) by Marguerite Duras contains a passage about ancestor photographs that insightfully captures a typical Western reaction to Chinese memorial portraiture—whether paintings or photographs. Duras draws upon her life experience in a Chinese community in colonial Saigon. Her description of ancestor likenesses illuminates a Western tendency to perceive the subjects in Chinese ancestor portraits as generalized types.

When she [mother] was old, too, grey-haired, she went to the photographer’s, alone, and had her photograph taken in her best dark-red dress. . . . The better-off natives [Vietnamese, some of Chinese descent] used to go to the photographer’s too, just once in their lives, when they saw death was near. . . . Their photos were large, all the same size, hung in handsome gilt frames near the altars to their ancestors. All these photographs of different people, and I’ve seen many of them, gave practically identical results, the resemblance was stunning. It wasn’t just because all old people look alike, but because the portraits themselves were invariably touched up in such a way that any facial peculiarities, if there were any left, were minimized. All the faces were prepared in the same way to confront eternity, all toned down, all uniformly rejuvenated. This was what people wanted. This general resemblance, this tact, would characterize the memory of their passage through the family, bear witness at once to the singularity and to the reality of that transit. The more they resembled each other the more evidently they belonged in the ranks of the family. . . . And they all wore an expression I’d still recognize anywhere. My mother’s expression in the photograph with the red dress was the same. Noble, some would say. Others would call it withdrawn.⁴²

Duras remarks that the figures in ancestor portraits all seem stunningly alike, and she is not the only Westerner to have made this observation. From the Chinese point of view, it has been established that ancestor portraits were visualized as punctiliously accurate records of uniquely individual faces. Putting aside for a moment whether that goal was actually accomplished, we should investigate some reasons for Westerners’ doubts about whether ancestor portraits were particularized images. Modern distaste for rigid frontality and some aspects of the psychology of vision may contribute to the phenomenon that Westerners find it hard to perceive the uniqueness of Chinese ancestor portraits when they first encounter them.

According to current theories of vision in the West, people remember faces by playing back in their minds fleeting expressions and characteristic facial movements.⁴³ Expressive facial motions are easier for a brain to remember than the appearance of the contour or features of a face. If it proves to be a universal truth that a smile is more recognizable and memorable than a nose, then the conceptual scheme that characterizes

3.14

Phil, by Chuck Close

(American, b. 1940), 1969

Synthetic polymer on canvas;

274.5 x 213.5 cm. Whitney Museum of

American Art, New York; purchase with

funds from Mrs. Robert M. Benjamin, 69.102

Photograph ©2001 Whitney Museum of

American Art

ancestor portraits is contrary to how the brain processes visual information. In most Chinese memorial portraits light and shadow are eschewed, or de-emphasized for fear that the semblance of light flickering across a face might interfere with presenting a clear view of all the facial features. The premise of representing a face as a static map—and here it can be recalled that Chinese physiognomic texts describe faces as cosmic landscapes—is diametrically opposed to the new theories of vision. The frozen quality of the ancestors’ faces no doubt troubles some Western viewers, misleading them into believing that Chinese portraits are inaccurate records of individual appearance. If it truly is more difficult to recognize the face of a loved one in an impassive rather than expressive state, the everyday cultural conditioning in traditional China with its widespread circulation of frontally posed physiognomy charts and portraits no doubt overrode those difficulties.

The static expression used to depict Chinese ancestors is difficult for Westerners to decode. It contrasts with the approach of Western funeral effigies, which animate the departed through particularized expressions and gestures. Both Chinese and Western artists sought to salvage and record the physical data of a person’s appearance, but with the major difference that for ancestor portraits the Chinese artist did not wish to create the illusion that the subject was still alive.

Western discomfort with en face portraiture is deeply rooted in the history of the portrait between the Renaissance and the late twentieth century, when the emergence of the New York artist Chuck Close (born 1940) has been a leader in redefining how portraiture is evaluated (fig. 3.14). The brilliant scholar of Renaissance portraiture John Pope-Hennessy captures Western dissatisfaction with frontality in his examination of a portrait of Queen Anne of Cleves by Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1497–1543; fig. 3.15). He compares the portrait of the queen to another Holbein painting of similar date, which depicts the Duchess of Milan. The duchess stands facing forward, staring out of the painting with her eyes slightly downcast and her cheek barely turned. The result is the promise of a flickering facial expression, a desire by the duchess, who was known for her modesty, to communicate some reserved thought to the painter. In contrast, Queen Anne was depicted in a rigidly frontal orientation at the exact center of the composition. Her portrait is close in style to a Chinese ancestor likeness. Pope-Hennessy is highly complimentary of the portrait of the duchess, but he condemns the painting of the queen for the “featurelessness” of Anne’s face.⁴⁴ While it is far from lacking character, her face seems stiff and unanimated and its individuality is overlooked. The frontal iconic pose is ideally suited to the role of portraiture as description, which similarly is the intention of the Chinese ancestor portrait. But once a culture begins to believe that individual identity in portraiture is fashioned through animated gestures and glances that reveal the soul, the severely frontal iconic pose comes to be deemed unsatisfactory and frontally posed faces are perceived as featureless, as if they resemble one another. •

3.15
Queen Anne of Cleves
by Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1497–1543),
ca. 1539
Parchment on canvas; 65.1 x 48.5 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris
Photograph from Musée du Louvre

The decorative splendor of the costume, full face, and direct gaze of the portrait’s subject recall the treatment of Chinese sitters in ancestor likenesses.

4

Nomenclature, Production, and Documentary Value

Two of the most common designations in modern Chinese for the ancestor-portrait genre are *zuxian hua* and *zuzong hua*, both of which literally mean “ancestor painting.”¹ Several additional terms, some of which reflect cultural attitudes about ancestor portraits, are also employed and provide insights into the methods used to create them. A key issue about production is determining whether the portraits were painted from life or posthumously, both of which have always been widely accepted practices. Portraits are also often recopied if they become damaged, or new ones are painted in an anachronistic style long after the sitter’s death. Such customs complicate attempts to date ancestor portraits, which is another topic considered here. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the reliability of ancestor portraits as documents for the study of material culture. The question raised is whether or not the props in ancestor portraits—the clothing, carpets, and furniture—are accurate replications of contemporary goods used in Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) China.

Some of the traditional Chinese names for ancestor portraits draw attention to the paintings’ visual conventions. For example, the term *yiguan hua* (robe and cap painting) refers to the mandatory requirement for the sitters to wear formal clothing, preferably an official’s robes and headgear. “*Yiguan hua*” does not reveal whether the sitter was alive or dead when the portrait was painted, but many other names do. *Shen hua* (painting of the spirit) and *shenxi* (happy spirit) always refer to posthumous portrait subjects, and by virtue of their having become ancestors, they have achieved an eternally blessed or happy state of being. These terms do not, however, indicate whether

or not the paintings were made posthumously. They could have been made during a person's lifetime and withheld from circulation until after the subject's death. In the Chinese tradition, portraits made during life or after death are visually indistinguishable and both practices coexisted, so modern viewers can seldom know for sure when a portrait was created.

While many traditional terms for ancestor portraits in theory indicate whether a likeness was painted from life or posthumously, many of these terms have unfortunately come to be used interchangeably, thus losing their power to reveal the actual circumstances of a portrait's commission. The binomial *yixiang*, which literally means "portrait left behind," is a term that encompasses many types of portraits, including ancestor images. It is often translated as "posthumous portrait," but this blurs the distinction between an image commissioned by a living person near the end of his or her life to leave behind for family veneration and an image commissioned posthumously by a descendant. A consensus among Chinese scholars is that, if used properly, the term refers to the former situation.² Commissioning one's own ancestor portrait is analogous to composing one's own funerary epitaph, something the literati often did.

Another term for ancestor portraits, *dashou xiang* (portrait of great longevity), also in theory indicates that the subject was alive when the painting was composed. It refers to a practice of calling a painter into the sickroom of the gravely ill. This custom has been recorded in the early twentieth century and dates back at least to the Ming dynasty, when a physician described a painter arriving at the deathbed of his patient.³ The term *dashou xiang* seems to refer both to a hope that death will not come before the subject has reached an advanced age, and to the power of ancestor portraits to give long life to the memory of the deceased.

One commentator observed that in her experience in early twentieth-century China, people considered it critical to have an ancestor portrait painted while they were alive. Louise Wallace Hackney asserts that it was only for portraits intended for memorial veneration that a subject insisted on posing for the artist to ensure verisimilitude. For other types of portraits, the customer was content to meet the artist once and then let him paint from memory.⁴ Hackney's observation is important, but since China encompasses so many regions, and customs change over time, it should not be considered as a universal practice. All that can be said with certainty is that from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onward, commissioning an ancestor portrait during one's lifetime or when close to death was well established. But so, too, was ordering a portrait of a forebear after death. The essential consideration in either case was to achieve fidelity of outward appearance.

Several names for ancestor portraits that refer to the widespread custom of creating posthumous portraits underscore the importance of accurately transcribing the deceased's facial features. The terms *zhuiying* (retrieving the shadow) and *jiebo* (lifting the shroud) indicate posthumous production. *Zhuiying* identifies the convention in which relatives would recall for an artist the appearance of the deceased. The artist would show family members a "book of faces" — roughly painted sketches of different visages — to trigger memories of the deceased's features (fig. 4.1 and see fig. 3.7). The relatives would instruct the artist to make the ears resemble those on page ten, the eyes

those on page two, and so forth.⁵ When the artist finished, the family reviewed the sketch and suggested adjustments.⁶ Some Westerners in China have recorded surprise at the accuracy and lifelike vitality of images produced in this fashion, which Ladislav Kesner, Jr., has pointed out follows the same process as Western police sketches of suspects, which are composites based on witness's recall.⁷

Another method available to an artist who had never seen the deceased was to reconstruct his or her appearance by studying the faces of relatives. The painter Min Zhen (1730–after 1788), who was orphaned at twelve, was said to have suffered because he had no portraits of his parents to display at the annual sacrifices. That is what motivated him to become a painter. When he was old enough to paint, he studied those of his relatives who resembled his parents and painted properly realistic portraits for veneration.⁸

Painters went to great lengths to capture an accurate physical resemblance, and viewing the corpse was one viable option. This practice, however, was only appropriate for portraits of men, since according to proper Confucian decorum, women should not be viewed by outsiders. Theoretically, death did not end this prohibition. Yet viewing a woman's corpse must have had some common currency, since Ming moralists on several occasions condemned the practice.

Portraits painted by the method of “lifting the shroud” should be indistinguishable from likenesses created by other methods. The painter was expected to imbue the sitter's face with lifelike vigor, but one portrait in the Sackler's collection, *Portrait of the Seventh Prince Yi* (see fig. 4.7), is remarkable for its exceedingly ghoulish face. This pallor is difficult to explain but might suggest that the painting was created by an artist looking at a posthumous photograph. It was not uncommon in many parts of the world in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to take photographs of the recently deceased for families who might not otherwise have a keepsake image of the departed.⁹ However, the striking singularity of the image in the Sackler suggests an as-yet-unsolved riddle about the style. Problems in understanding this scroll are also discussed below.

In light of the coexistence of the two practices of painting portraits during life and after death, a question arises about the creation of pairs and sets of ancestor portraits as well as double portraits. At least two practices seem to have been common. In one case, a posthumous portrait was created of the first spouse to die. At the same time, a matching portrait of the living spouse was begun, but with the face left blank until after that person's death.¹⁰ It also seems that the descendants sometimes waited until the death of both parents before commissioning a pair of portraits.

4.1
Page from a sketchbook of faces
Qing dynasty, late–19th to early
20th century
Album page; ink and color on paper;
29.7 x 17.7 cm
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto;
purchased with Royal Ontario Museum
Foundation funds, 994.31.1
Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum,
© ROM

Workshop Organization

Maitaigong (purchased visage) is another term sometimes used to refer to ancestor portraits, and the name draws attention to the circumstances and commercial nature of their production. With few exceptions, ancestor portraits were composed in workshops, the products of collaboration between two or more artisans. Some shops may have specialized in ancestor portraits alone, but many produced a broader range of por-

traits, including images of living people, historical figures, and idealized, alluring women, such as *Beauty Holding an Orchid* in the Sackler's collection (fig. 4.2 and see fig. 4.9). Some workshops that produced posthumous ancestor portraits also advertised an expertise in scroll mounting.¹¹

Professional workshops typically employed a multistep approach to production that could be completed either in rapid succession or with a long delay between the stages. For portraits, first the body was painted and a blank space left for the head, which was later filled in by another artist. This practice was ideal for composing ancestor likenesses because the bodies are generalized, differentiated mostly by the clothing, which in the case of memorial portraits fits into standard types. A workshop could stock several partially finished images of subjects wearing wedding clothing, which was the standard dress for commoner's ancestor portraits. When a commission was received, a painter was dispatched to the home of the deceased to gather information about the forebear's appearance. After returning, he could pull out a partially finished painting and fill in the face. If scroll-mounters worked in the same shop, production was even more expeditious, and the finished ancestor portrait could be ready in good time for the funeral.

Typically, workshop organization in China was highly specialized. Ancestor portraits seem to fit the system of modular production that Lothar Ledderose has identified as a Chinese approach to creating art objects.¹² According to Ledderose, Chinese artists in a wide range of genres relied on standardized parts or modules to efficiently assemble large quantities of art objects, ranging from ancient ritual bronze vessels to lacquerware and porcelain.

In the case of ancestor portraits, the human body invariably appears to be composed of individual units attached to one another like Lego blocks. Just as the face and body were conceptualized separately, it was not necessary for one painter to envision and execute a completed body. Tasks as narrowly defined as painting only the sitter's shoes or hat could be assigned to artisans at the bottom tier of the workshop. Such subdivision would explain the common disregard for organic structure in the composition of ancestor portraits.

The painter who specialized in faces was always the master artist in the workshop and usually the only one to interact directly with clients. At least some of these artists were literate, as revealed in their notations about customer's requests in the "books of faces" they carried around to show their clients. To be able to paint a good face takes years of practice and, according to old-fashioned portrait painters in present-day Taiwan, there are a good number of trade secrets. One modern artist stated that six different-size brushes and charcoal sticks are needed just to paint the eyes and the fine hairs of the brows.¹³

The visual vocabulary used in ancestor portraits is highly repetitive, making it difficult to distinguish distinctive workshops or even guess how many existed at one time. Workshops that specialized in ancestor portraits did not usually put a mark or address on their works, and signatures and artists' seals on such likenesses are so rare they should be viewed with suspicion.

Workshops probably established identities by repeatedly using the same props—

4.2

Beauty Holding an Orchid

Qing dynasty, mid-18th to 19th century

Title slip in English: Lady Liu (the Yongzheng emperor's concubine)

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 90.0 x 69.1 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, \$1991.50

This painting is one of two related images in the Sackler's collection (see fig. 6). The identification as Lady Liu rests solely on the English-language label and should not be given much weight. This woman wearing Han Chinese dress is a generic "beauty," and by her gesture of holding an orchid that she is about to pin in her hair, she advertises her sexual allure. Her direct eye contact with the viewer seems intended to elicit male fantasies and demonstrates the degree to which frontal portraiture had become normative. It could even be used to provide tawdry pleasure.

The chromatically brilliant palette and thick build up of white paint for the woman's earrings are features typically found on paintings used as room décor. The painting may have once been mounted as a panel in a standing screen. The work is similar to a number of paintings of women that were created for the pleasure of the Yongzheng (reigned 1723–35) and Qianlong (reigned 1736–96) emperors, suggesting a possible palace provenance for the work. Alternatively the painting may have been circulated among a male clientele in the city's pleasure quarters.

particular types of chairs, carpets, textiles—in the works they produced. If a customer liked a certain "look," he could find out which shop to visit, but the repertoire of props was narrow enough that some overlap also existed. Comparison of three scrolls of unrelated men illustrates the correspondences in paintings that might suggest a common workshop. *Portrait of Oboi* (fig. 4.3) and a portrait of an unidentified official (see appendix 1 fig. 28), both in the Sackler's collection, and a portrait of an unnamed official now in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto share common details (fig. 4.4). All three paintings sport the same black-lacquer chairs and identical carpets; and all use foreshortened perspective to portray the sitters' feet, which is relatively uncommon. But minor differences in the chair brocades would suggest they were not made as a set. Rather, the shared features are probably a trademark style that was used by a workshop.

4.3

Portrait of Oboi (died 1669)

Qing dynasty, mid–18th to early
20th century

Title slip in English: Ao Pai

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 193.7 x 125.0 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions
Program and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.93

Once a powerful official, Oboi was purged from the court and died in prison in 1669. His descendants probably would not have commissioned this impressive ancestor portrait until after 1713, the year that Oboi was posthumously rehabilitated. Judging by the almost photorealistic face, it seems likely to have been executed closer to 1900. If so, there is no record to indicate why his descendants commissioned a portrait so many years after his death.

Oboi wears the formal *chaofu* court robe, and the thumb ring on his right hand indicates he was an archer. In his case, the thumb ring may be an allusion to his membership in the conquest generation that was renowned for military skills. Although the artist suggested spatial recession by using oblique lines to draw the footstool, the carpet is painted in a traditional method parallel to the picture plane. Treating the carpet like a panel of wallpaper fights against the illusion of spatial depth. The carpet pattern is based on a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) prototype.

4.4

Portrait of an Unidentified Official

Qing dynasty, mid–18th to early
20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
183.0 x 122.5 cm

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; George
Crofts Collection, 922.20.244

Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum,
©ROM

While the repeated features in these paintings suggest that they were created in the same workshop during the same general period, the styles of the faces are quite distinct. Workshops could produce paintings in more than one style at a time according to customers' requests. Oboi's vividly realistic visage suggests the epitome of mirrorlike verisimilitude; not a single detail has been missed. The artist has plastically modeled the face with heavy shading around the eyes, nose, mouth, and cheeks in a style most closely associated with the late–nineteenth to early–twentieth century. In contrast, the two portraits of unnamed officials are less overtly influenced by Western style. Use of multiple styles obviously complicates any attempt to develop a strict chronological sequence for ancestor portraits.¹⁴

Painting Techniques

Stencils have been continuously employed in painting workshops since at least the Tang dynasty (618–906). The process of using them is described by Lothar Ledderose: “The painters had a pounce—a sheet of paper on which the contour lines of a motif are indicated by small holes. When these sheets were laid on the painting surface, and they were pounced with black or colored powder, the contours became visible beneath.”¹⁵ Painters followed the lines to guide their final brush strokes. In the case of ancestor portraits, by using a stencil to outline the body and chair, artists could increase their speed and also create duplicates for use in pairs and sets. Three portraits in the Sackler’s collection that portray successive holders of the hereditary title Prince Yi illustrate the precision that was attainable by using stencils (figs. 4.5–4.7). Virtually every motif is identical, including the diameter of the beads and the length of the wearers’ court necklaces.

Two of these scrolls (figs. 4.5, 4.6) carry labels dating them to 1905; figure 4.7 is dated on the label to 1911. It seems likely that the pounce used for the first two scrolls was taken out of storage to create the third portrait, which varies from the first two only in the hues of some colors, which is the result of using a different batch of pigments. The three scrolls also have nearly identical yellow silk mountings, but because the silk “frame” for the 1911 painting uses fabric dyed at a different time, its color is a more acidic yellow.

Use of stencils might seem to imply that ancestor portraits were executed quickly, but some portraits show evidence of great care in the finishing details. When a number of portraits were cleaned and remounted at the Sackler, it was discovered that paint had often been applied to both sides of the silk to modulate and enrich the colors. Many paintings, including *Portrait of Prince Hongming* (see fig. 3), reveal opaque white applied on the reverse side of the face. The white is a foil for the skin colors applied on the front side of the silk and helps in creating impressions of highlights and reflected light. In several portraits, again including *Portrait of Prince Hongming*, white was also brushed on the reverse of the paintings in areas where the clothing is decorated by a dragon motif and also on the back of each bead in the court necklace.

Other warmer-tone paints were also applied on the reverse sides of several portraits to create special effects. For example, in *Portrait of Lirongbao’s Wife* (see fig. 6.7), the gold dragons on the coat are an especially rich color because red paint was applied to the back of the silk in the area of the two dragon heads (fig. 4.8). Red warms the gold so that it does not appear brassy. The main color field of the robe is also enhanced by pigment on the reverse. Light blue was applied on the back to enrich the dark blue paint applied on the front of the silk. Light orange appears on the reverse behind the areas of white fur trim. The orange nicely softens the white applied on the front, which otherwise would be too bright and frosty.

Not all workshop artists used stencils. Another means for achieving a well-balanced, symmetrical body in a portrait was to trace a grid pattern in charcoal on the silk or paper. An artist could use the grid to help calculate body proportions when painting a figure.¹⁶ Sometimes an artist also used sketch lines as an aid to composing a portrait. If a charcoal grid was used, the painter could erase it without traces, but under drawing was traditionally executed in light ink lines and is permanent. Traces are

4.5

Portrait of Yinxiang, the First Prince Yi
(1686–1730)

Qing dynasty, 1905

Title slip in Chinese: Portrait of the first Prince Yi, Xian [posthumous name]; redone posthumous portrait in the twelfth lunar month of the *jiachen* year in the Guangxu reign period [January 6–February 3, 1905]
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 186.7 x 121.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Smithsonian Collections Acquisition
Program and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.84

The thirteenth son of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), Yinxiang received a first-degree principedom and the title Prince Yi from his half-brother, the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35). Yinxiang was highly honored at court, which is revealed by his having been granted the honor to wear a yellow *chaofu* (first-rank court attire). This portrait is one of three made with the same stencil (see figs. 4.6, 4.7).

The ladder-back throne chair is a style associated with the work of craftsmen in Guangdong Province, who often supplied items for the palace circle in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some details in the proportions of this chair, however, seem a little off, indicating that the painter probably worked from a pattern book rather than an actual model. The purple color seems to suggest it is made of costly *zitan* rosewood.

apparent in several of the portraits in the Sackler's collection, but the sketch lines are barely discernable unless a painting is scrutinized intently. One painting that reveals preliminary drawing is *Beauty Holding an Orchid* (see fig. 4.2), which seems to have been painted without use of a grid pattern since there are a few places where the proportions were miscalculated. Sketch lines indicate that the artist was not pleased with his first attempt at drawing the woman's ears (fig. 4.9). After outlining exceptionally long earlobes, the painter changed his mind and colored in only a small portion of the delineated areas.

Portrait of the Sixth Prince Yi

Qing dynasty, 1905

Title slip in Chinese: Portrait of the sixth Prince Yi; redone posthumous portrait in the twelfth lunar month of the *jiachen* year in the Guangxu reign period

[January 6–February 3, 1905]

Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk;

image only, 186.7 x 121.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.86

The astonishing realism here seems almost photographic. Since the portrait was painted at the same time as figure 4.5 and only a few years earlier than figure 4.7, the contrasting styles for the faces would seem to have special significance. Now that the portraits are removed from their original context, it is impossible to reconstruct exactly what the implications of the different styles were. The sixth Prince Yi was Zaiyuan (1816–1861), who lived at a time when photography was beginning to be noticed. He may have had a photograph taken that served as a model for this painting, but an image from 1861 would not have been as clear and detailed as this painter's work. The artist must have made special efforts to create this meticulous and lifelike image, but his motivation for treating realistically just one of the three portraits in a family set is unclear.

The court necklaces worn by the three Princes Yi seem long compared to the more common standard such as that seen in *Portrait of Oboi* (see fig. 4.3). Both lengths of chains coexisted in Qing (1644–1911) court society, though longer ones were more common toward the end of the dynasty. The number of beads (108) was the same in each chain, but those with larger diameters make a chain longer. The number of beads is the same as in a Buddhist rosary, which was the original prototype for the court necklace.

Evidence of a team approach to Chinese portraiture is especially obvious in *Beauty Holding an Orchid*. First the woman's body was painted, and when another artist was called in to add the face, he slightly misjudged the proportion and made it too large, so that the chin overlaps the collar. This oversized face painted in warm skin tones seems almost like a luminous orb that both invites and demands attention. The woman prominently holds an orchid in her hand, and as she already wears one in her head-dress, it is tempting to assume that she is about to pin the flower there too. In

4.7

Portrait of the Seventh Prince Yi
Qing dynasty, 1911

Title slip in Chinese: Portrait of the posthumously enfeoffed seventh Prince Yi; posthumously painted in the twelfth lunar month of the *yincheng* year of the Xuanton reign [1911]

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 184 x 120 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Smithsonian Collections Acquisition
Program and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.102

This portrait is perplexing because of the confusing information found in the identifying label and the cadaverous pallor of the seventh Prince Yi. By most calculations the seventh Prince Yi would be Zaidun (1827–1890) who, however, did not receive this title posthumously. Problems in ascertaining the sitter's identity are discussed in appendix 2 under the entry for Zaidun. Whoever the subject of the portrait is, the treatment of the face is anomalous. The best explanation is that the portrait was painted from a posthumous photograph, but why other portraits like this do not seem to exist cannot yet be answered.

traditional China, such a gesture was considered mildly erotic, and this painting was surely intended for a male audience that had learned to enjoy women as luxury “commodities.”¹⁷

The practice of constructing the human figure by painting the head and body separately is especially clear in a subcategory of ancestor portraits referred to as “pasted-head” images. Whenever an artist confronted a scroll with a preprinted body, he had two options, either to paint the face above the body, integrating the two as best he

4.8
Detail of the reverse side of *Portrait of Lirongbao's Wife* (see fig. 6.7)

4.9
Detail of *Beauty Holding an Orchid* (see fig. 4.2)

could, or to paint the head as a separate work and cut it out and paste it in place above the body. The latter, common method occurs mostly in ancestor portraits created for customers of modest means.

Both faces in *Portrait of an Elderly Couple* are cutouts pasted onto the painting (figs. 4.10, 4.11). In some double portraits, one sitter's face has been painted directly on the surface of the painting, while the second one is a cutout attached by glue. If an artist makes a mistake in painting, or if a family does not approve of the first image they are shown, the pasted-head method offers an easy remedy. In modern Taiwan, pasted-head portraits are disdained, because, as one critic claims, the "head always falls off in the end."¹⁸ Yet, good appliqué work is so expert that it is often difficult to detect.

The pasted-head method of production, whether executed well or somewhat clumsily, highlights the disjuncture between face and body in Chinese portrait painting. The method is really no different than that used in other styles of portrait painting, but it intensifies the dichotomy between head and body. Faces tend to be naturalistic or at least meticulously detailed, if a bit exaggeratedly large scale, while bodies are flat and generalized. Necks are often dispensed with altogether.

Multiple Versions, Recopied Portraits, and Problems of Dating

A recent publication trenchantly observes that "few issues in Chinese art and art history arouse the passions of scholars and the public as readily as debates about authenticity."¹⁹ A grand tradition in China of copying old masterpieces has fueled a relentless drive to identify correctly and distinguish originals from copies. But authenticity in the usual sense is not a legitimate concern for the study of ancestor portraits. Certainly fakes exist (see discussion in chapter 7), but the modern insistence upon uniqueness as a criterion for judging a painting's worth has inadvertently encouraged specious notions about the singularity of ancestor portraits. In fact, the portraits were regularly produced in multiple versions and many are close copies of lost or damaged originals, or may have been retouched and remounted. Since ancestor portraits were viewed as ritual objects rather than as art per se, the likeness of the person portrayed in the portrait was valued, not the painting itself.

As art historians learn more about Chinese painting, the concept of uniqueness is being challenged on several fronts. For example, attendees at a literati gathering might have each commissioned a similar group portrait to commemorate their participation at the event.²⁰ Multiple versions are even more likely in the context of memorial portraiture. The sons in a family might have commissioned several copies of a formal portrait of their father and mother (this practice continues today). One copy would be displayed at the annual family sacrifices, but each son might have his own private domestic altar above which he would want to hang a copy of his late father's and late mother's portraits. He could place offerings in front of the portraits and report events to his forebears (see chapter 1).²¹

A rigidly frontal portrait of a man in official dress now in the collection of the National Museum of Korea supports the notion that sons who lived away from home might have commissioned a copy of a forebear's portrait.²² Since customs about

ancestor portraits in Korea and China are very similar, the information learned from the inscription on this portrait is applicable to both countries. The inscription explains that the man in the portrait is of Korean descent but had lived most of his life and died in China, where his portrait was placed in a family temple. The man's son, who commissioned the portrait now in the National Museum, lived in Korea, and so he sent to China to have a copy of his father's ancestor portrait made for his personal use. Chinese sons who lived a great distance from the family often followed the same practice.

Multiple copies of a portrait made within a short time span as in the above scenario is one phenomenon; another issue is the creation of copies long after a person's death. Title slips and occasionally inscriptions on a number of Chinese ancestor

4.10

Portrait of an Elderly Couple

Qing dynasty, 19th–early 20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on cotton

canvas; image only, 231.1 x 165.7 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian

Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian

Collections Acquisition Program and partial

gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.128

This work was painted in north China, most likely Shanxi Province, where ancestor portraits were routinely made using coarse canvas. While most Chinese scrolls consist of a pictorial image mounted with a surrounding frame of silk strips, in an economizing move most canvas scrolls dispense with that nicety. To simulate the effect of a mounting, workshops painted large borders around the portrait images.

Most Shanxi portraits are conservative in style. For example, they usually feature attendants behind the main figures, which was a standard practice in twelfth- to thirteenth-century tomb murals, and also many Ming dynasty ancestor portraits. The clothing in Shanxi portraits is also old-fashioned. It includes wide garment sleeves that were popular with Ming dress but generally went out of fashion in the Qing.

4.11

Detail of a "pasted" face in figure 4.10.

portraits identify them as “repainted posthumous portraits” (*chong zhuiying*) or declare them to have been “remounted” (*chong biao*). In identifying a scroll as one or the other, the distinction may not have always been carefully observed. Frequently, the shops that remounted scrolls also specialized in painting posthumous ancestor portraits, and the term “remounted” might often have concealed recopying or extensive repair to a scroll.²³ The most frequent reason for making copies was to replace worn or damaged paintings.

Though it may be vexing for modern viewers, it is not always possible to ascertain if a portrait is a copy; often there might not be an identifying label. Stylistic clues may help date an ancestor portrait, but the wide range of styles employed simultaneously make the exact date of execution difficult to pin down. Moreover, knowledge that a large number of copies are not necessarily identifiable as copies creates a major problem in trying to construct a stylistic sequence for use in dating ancestor portraits. Clothing has long been used as a clue for dating, but it is not trustworthy. The handsome portrait of an unnamed censor wearing a Ming robe in figure 4.12 correctly reproduces Ming-style dress, but the face is rendered in a style that while associated with artists active in the late Ming dynasty is more typical of Qing painters. Thus the painting is likely to be a copy. In cases where the date of a portrait seems indeterminate but the clothing is typical of Ming costume, the work can accurately be called Ming style but should not automatically be attributed to that dynasty.

Besides replacing a damaged scroll, other motivations to copy portraits can be found. One explanation for someone long dead being the subject of a new portrait stems from the Chinese practice of “posthumous promotion.” A son who earned a high rank in the Qing dynasty had the right to apply his status retroactively to his father and grandfather, even if they were deceased. He would then probably have commissioned new portraits showing his forebears wearing clothing in accordance with the recently earned promotion. The Sackler’s portrait of Yu Chenglong (1617–1684; fig. 4.13) may document this phenomenon, since the inscription specifically refers to his grandson’s glory. Yu Chenglong is pictured wearing a first-rank official’s badge, which features a crane (fig. 4.14); the honor to wear this was conferred posthumously upon Yu owing to his grandson’s promotion for meritorious conduct. Short of commissioning an entirely new portrait for a posthumous promotion, an existing likeness could be doctored by repainting the rank badge. See appendix 1 figure 2 for an example of a dragon roundel that was changed into a rank badge featuring a mythical *qilin*, or unicorn.

Family dissatisfaction with an existing likeness was another impetus to recopy a portrait and try to improve upon the model. A painting in the Honolulu Academy of Arts attests to this practice in a son’s inscription on his father’s image. He explains that a long time had elapsed between the time of his father’s death and the execution of this portrait, but since he had never felt satisfied that the first memorial portrait was artful enough, he eventually commissioned a new portrait based upon the old one.²⁴

Another circumstance in the creation of ancestor portraits or copies of them is the possibility of an exceedingly long delay between the death of the person and the making of the portrait—sometimes decades or even centuries would pass, depending on family circumstances. A decision to build a new family temple might motivate people to commission portraits of family members deceased for hundreds of years.²⁵ These

4.12

Portrait of a Censor

Ming-style portrait; probably 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 148.3 x 90.5 cm

The Art Museum, Princeton University,

New Jersey; the DuBois Schanck Morris

Collection, v1947–164

Photograph by Bruce M. White, from

The Art Museum, Princeton University

If this portrait were to be dated on the basis of costume, it would fall squarely in the Ming dynasty. The barely perceptible sideways turn of the sitter's head and his asymmetrically posed feet are also features more commonly seen in Ming than Qing portraits. But the color modeling of the face seems to suggest that this is an eighteenth-century copy of an earlier portrait.

The badge on the wearer's chest displays a mythical *xiezhi*, the insignia of a censor. A pattern of puffy clouds decorates the robe in standard Ming fashion, but the spacing between the cloud volutes is unusually wide. Minor details can become subtly distorted in paintings, a problem easily accentuated each time a painting is recopied.

portraits of long-dead ancestors would not be legitimate ritual objects, since forebears far back in time do not receive individual sacrifices, but some families still liked to display portraits of many generations. A family that elected to have such portraits made might have the distant forebears painted in a style that exactly mirrors that used for ancestors receiving active ritual veneration. But they could also have the distant forebear painted with less specificity than usual. Three posthumous portraits in the

Sackler's collection — namely, the set of images that depict three holders of the title Prince Yi (see figs. 4.5–4.7) — introduce some of these issues.

All three portraits are labeled in Chinese as posthumous portraits (*zhuiying*) and two as “recopied posthumous images” (*chong zhuiying*). The recopied portraits are the ones dated to 1905 (figs. 4.5, 4.6). The title slip on figure 4.5 identifies the sitter as Yinxiang (1686–1730), the first Prince Yi, who was the thirteenth son of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722). The title slips on the other two paintings do not name the individuals but give their standing as the sixth and seventh Princes Yi respectively. Following what is known about the order of succession of the title Prince Yi, these individuals are identified as Zaiyuan (1816–1861) in figure 4.6 and Zaidun (1827–1890) in figure 4.7. The biographies of the three princes appear in appendix 2, where, in the entry for Zaidun, some of the practices and records detailing princely transmission are discussed. This issue requires special consideration because the label on the scroll for the seventh Prince Yi contains information that is not easy to reconcile with the Qing genealogies of the imperial lineage, which are organized by descent and not by princely title.²⁶ Although a genealogy yields plentiful information on men who either inherited or were posthumously granted the title of Prince Yi, it does not identify individuals by generation (*bei*), which is the system used on the labels of the paintings to number the princes. The label on the scroll dated to 1911 (see fig. 4.7) includes the information that the seventh Prince Yi was posthumously enfeoffed, but this contradicts what else is known about the succession of this princely title. Thus, while it is impossible to be certain about the identity of this prince, Zaidun is still the most reasonable conjecture. The mystery of identity assumes greater significance in light of the anomalous style used to portray the figure's face. Does the ghostly style hint at some historical irregularity in the transmission of the Prince Yi title?

It is not known who commissioned this set of matching portraits, nor can it be ascertained why they were made on two occasions. A likely patron would have been the holder of the title Prince Yi between the years 1905 and 1911; or rather, his father since the prince was a young child.²⁷ The portraits may have been commissioned to strengthen claim to the title, which the emperor not infrequently reassigned from one branch of a family to another depending on political events. In that case, the new recipients would lack portraits of previous holders of the title.

Inclusion of Yinxiang's portrait in this set of three paintings is based on his position as the first Prince Yi. But inclusion of the sixth Prince Yi, Zaiyuan, is puzzling since he was ordered to commit suicide in 1861 after a coup d'état. At that time Zaiyuan's heir was stripped of the title, which was awarded to another branch of the family headed by Zaidun. When Zaidun died in 1890, the title passed to his eldest son, Pujing, who died in disgrace in 1900 and was posthumously stripped of the title. The next Prince Yi was Pujing's two-year-old nephew Yuqi, whose father may have been the patron of the Sackler's paintings. It is curious why an ancestor who died in political disgrace was included in this set of portraits. There may be more to the family story than we can now reconstruct. It is also possible that the set of portraits was originally much larger and included an image of each Prince Yi regardless of status.

Whatever the original motivation to paint these portraits, they attest to the

天承運 奉

皇帝制曰九章賜秩先疏閱之
勞三世承恩聿著燕貽之澤特
敷茂典用闡休聲爾原任總督
江南江西等處地方軍務兼理
糧餉操江太子太保兵部尚書
兼都察院右副都御史于成龍
乃巡撫貴州等處地方提督軍
務兼理湖北川東兵餉都察院
右副都御史加五級于準之祖
父淳心抱質善氣儲祥樹芳表
於鄉邦人瑞夙推舊德擁節旋
於方域孫謀式播新猷茲以爾
孫克襄公事贈爾為光祿大夫
錫之誥命於戲錫璫燦之雲章
高門溢慶沛濊汪之天澤奕葉
流輝寵命丕承嘉脩永著
康熙肆拾伍年叁月初捌日

4.13

Portrait of Yu Chenglong (1617–1684)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Inscription dated 1706: see appendix 2 for translation

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;

image only, 167.7 x 102.0 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.;
purchase, \$1997.39

The inscription on this portrait records a patent of promotion that was posthumously awarded to Yu Chenglong in 1706 (see appendix 2). Due to the meritorious service of a descendant, Yu's rank was posthumously elevated in that year, so his family would have wanted to commission a portrait of him wearing his new, top-rank insignia seen here. Based on the style of the face, however, this portrait seems more likely to date to the nineteenth century, but the actual date of the painting cannot be conclusively determined.

The portrait nonetheless captures a unique visage, suggesting that the portraitist had a reliable model. Yu's bright red nose is a feature commonly associated with tipplers, and his official biography mentions that he was fond of his cups.

common practice of making posthumous portraits long after death as well as recopying portraits. The three strikingly distinct styles used for the faces of these otherwise uniform portraits also raise questions about the rhetoric of style. Does it carry coded meaning? Some provocative questions can be broached, but as of yet there are no clear answers.

The first Prince Yi's face was painted in a much less illusionistic fashion than the other two, even taking into account the ghoulishness of the seventh prince. Yinxiang's face is quite flat and perfunctory. According to the label on the painting, it is a recopied image, and we would assume that the artist in 1905 was working from a model of another painting, although there is no way to know.

The copyist may have faithfully reproduced the older portrait, but there is also another possible explanation for its style. Yinxiang had become a "distant ancestor," which is a change in status that occurs after three generations have passed. At that time an individual's spirit tablet is removed from the domestic altar and the performance of regular, particularized rituals is replaced by a single, generalized ceremony dedicated to all of the family's ancestors.²⁸ Although Yinxiang was the first Prince Yi, he was no longer part of anyone's living memory and as with most remote ancestors, his face no longer required an artist to render carefully all the details. The phenomenon of treating distant ancestors as conventional figures is often discernable in multigenerational ancestor portraits. There the earliest ancestors often appear with masklike faces, in contrast to the individualized treatment given to the faces of recent generations.

In 1905, Zaiyuan, the sixth-generation Prince Yi, had been dead for more than forty years but was apparently not yet transformed into a distant ancestor. His face is depicted in a photorealistic style that came into vogue after his death, demonstrating again that many aspects of ancestor portraits can be anachronistic. The exceptional amount of detail in Zaiyuan's face suggests that the artist was either working from a very detailed painting or a photograph, which is plausible given that Zaiyuan's contacts with the foreign legations would have given him opportunity to meet the first photographers in China. The dark shadows where the brow curves create an effect often seen in early photographs, which used harsh lighting; however, the precision of the details in the painting is far greater than a photograph from the 1860s would have been able to capture.

The furrowed skin folds and asymmetrical crow's-feet around the prince's deep-set eyes are convincingly particularized, as are the pockmarks that dot his dark, leathery cheeks on both sides of a long, chiseled nose. The face is visually compelling yet emotionally distant in its excruciatingly realistic detail. The style seems to anticipate the photorealism of modern times and the work of the American painter Chuck Close (born 1940; see fig. 3.14). The vividness of the image suggests some special importance for Zaiyuan but contradicts the tragically ignoble end of his life. We can only wonder if the label on the painting was accidentally switched with that of the seventh Prince Yi, and if the deathly pallor was really a comment on Zaiyuan's dishonor.

Whatever explanations are offered, the cadaverous look of the face in figure 4.7 is unsettling. The painting suggests that the artist worked from a corpse, but this would have been impossible given the long time lapse between 1911 and 1890, the death date

of Zaidun, presumed to be the seventh Prince Yi. A more likely model would be a posthumous photograph of the deceased. Yet this explanation is not entirely satisfactory either, since no other equally ghostly ancestor portraits are known. It would seem that some special message was being communicated by its peculiar style. The questions raised by the nearly simultaneous creation of these three portraits with such distinctly different faces underline the subtle and as-yet still-undeciphered meanings of style in the genre of ancestor portraits.

The Prince Yi portraits also sound a warning about problems in dating ancestor paintings. If they did not bear dated labels, it would be hard to imagine judging from the styles of the faces that they were painted within a six-year span. The dates for figures 4.5 and 4.6 could easily have been assigned to the eighteenth century for the former and the late nineteenth to the twentieth century for the latter. Instead of trying to assign precise dates, it is often more appropriate to date ancestor portraits by giving them a range of years—dating them to either the first or second half of the Qing dynasty, instead of to a specific century. Ancestor portraiture is conservative by nature and revivals of earlier styles are practiced alongside the introduction of new fashions. Copied portraits that do not necessarily reveal telltale signs are also plentiful. Prudence calls for generous leeway in dating ancestor portraits.

Documenting Material Culture

Ancestor portraits are frequently used to illustrate furniture, carpets, and costumes of the Ming and Qing dynasties, but no one seems to have rigorously questioned whether they constitute trustworthy records. Knowing that exact fidelity was ritually mandated for the faces in ancestor portraits, people have incorrectly assumed the same of the physical objects depicted. There was, however, an inherent conflict between a standard promoting absolute accuracy and a motivation to ennoble the portrait's subject. While portraits are unquestionably important documents of the Chinese material world, they should be approached with caution.

As noted earlier, it is difficult to ascertain whether a portrait was painted from life or after death; and in the case of the latter, whether it was a reliable copy or fabricated in an anachronistic style without a direct model. Even when a painting is copied, subtle descriptive errors can easily occur, and these are magnified when a painting is created solely from the imagination. Because most ancestor portraits have previously been assumed to be originals, analysts have rarely looked for minute inconsistencies in the representation of everyday goods. Nor has it been generally recognized that painters were often creating court costumes of which they had no firsthand knowledge. In the 1943 group portrait in figure 2.5, for example, the late-Qing clothing was painted in the mid-twentieth century, long after that type of dress had gone out of fashion.²⁹

Concerns about the accuracy of costume exist on two levels. In addition to the question of the veracity of period style for the clothing, a second issue is whether the status markers in a painting reflect the actual social position of the sitter. In fact, there seems to have been a fair amount of latitude for families to portray an ancestor with a status higher than that earned in life. This phenomenon was an old concern, and in the

eleventh century the sumptuary laws were revised to allow people to “depict their ancestor as though they held higher rank.”³⁰ In Ming and Qing ancestor portraits, 90 percent of the figures wear clothing appropriate for nobles or government officials; yet ancestor portraits were extremely common among ordinary people. Even taking into account the ease with which court rank could be purchased in the late nineteenth century, 90 percent of the people who commissioned portraits could not have held such exalted status.

One of the clues to the misappropriation of high rank in a portrait is an inappropriate mixture of rank insignia. Out of a sample of about two hundred portraits of figures wearing court hats, almost 70 percent wear the ruby finial reserved for the first rank. Although rarely seen in the least-expensive portraits, the ruby appears far more often than can have been realistically possible. A son might not have dared to appropriate the entire costume of a first-rank official for his forebear, but it did not seem too pushy to request the coveted ruby. Portraits of princes and top-rank officials were more likely to be faithful to the sumptuary laws than were humble citizens because, although only a limited number of outsiders saw a family’s ancestor portraits, overstepping the sumptuary laws too far might have been dangerous or at least overly presumptuous for people in positions of power. The degree of tolerance for families aggrandizing the appearance of their ancestors is a subject that deserves further investigation.

A survey of several hundred individual portraits raised some interesting questions about the value of portraits as records of costume. In Qing dynasty court bureaucracy, both civil and military officials wore rank badges, but in a sample of portraits only 5 percent display military insignia, and of these, almost half wear the lion badge that before 1662 was the first-rank emblem and later was the second-rank (see fig. 5.12). Lower-level military posts were awarded largely based on feats of physical prowess, so the elite often looked down on low-rank military officers, creating a bias against the use of these lower tier badges in ancestor portraits.

According to court regulations, civil officials wore on the front of their coats badges with birds that faced the wearer’s right. The husband’s rank was extended to his wife, who wore an identical badge, except that by the mid-eighteenth century it was a custom that the bird on a woman’s badge would face to her left to create mirror symmetry when she sat to the west of her husband—the designated position for a female. Military officials wore the animal insignia facing to the wearer’s left, and their wives’ faced the reverse direction.

Examination of a large sampling of portraits of civil officials that probably date to the mid-eighteenth century and later reveals that men’s bird insignia face the wearer’s right, the canonical direction, only slightly more often than they face left. In the case of women, in contrast, the odds are slightly more than four to one that the bird is correctly oriented; this difference between the sexes is unexplained. Most of the exceptions for women are linked to a preference for mirror symmetry. If a portrait displays a man with two consorts seated below him, the birds on the women’s badges are often portrayed so that they look toward each other. In other words, the bird on one woman’s badge faces the prescribed direction, while the bird on the other badge has been reversed to balance the painted imagery.

4.14

Crane badge for first-rank civil official
Qing dynasty, late 19th century
Silk tapestry (*kesi*) with embroidered details;
metallic and silk threads; 33.5 x 31.0 cm
Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson
Photograph by Charles Rumph

In the Sackler's portrait collection two men wear first-rank civilian badges decorated with cranes that face to the sitters' left instead of the prescribed right (figs. 4.13, 4.14, and see fig. 6.8). According to the inscription on *Portrait of Yu Chenglong*, the sitter received a posthumous promotion based on his descendant's meritorious government service. The other painting, *Portrait of Lirongbao* (see fig. 6.8), depicts a man who also received a posthumous promotion; however, it is not one that would have earned him a crane rank badge. There is not enough evidence to support the thesis that a reverse-facing insignia indicates a rank obtained posthumously, but that possibility deserves further exploration.

The number of discrepancies between what is prescribed by sumptuary codes and what appears in actual paintings leads to the question of whether the deviations were significant. Alternatively, were the differences a conceptual problem of confusion between the sitter's and the viewer's left and right? It is unlikely that something as important as court-dress regulations would be randomly disregarded, but either the portraits are "wrong" or the actual court rules were not as strictly enforced as most scholars believe.

While it is important to recognize that details in ancestor portraits are not always accurate, the unfamiliar should not be regarded as suspect. The man's conical hat pictured in *Portrait of Father Zhang Jimin and Mother Zhao* is a hat seen in a number of seventeenth-century-style portraits (see fig. 2.6). It often confuses viewers, however, who are aware of a similar-looking Korean hat and are unaware of the Chinese prototype.

Many Chinese portraits have been labeled Korean just because of this hat. The Chinese version of this conical headgear is illustrated in the Ming encyclopedia *Sancai tuhui*, which was published in the early seventeenth century.³¹ In the same portrait the sectioned, or “melon wedge,” hat worn by the young boy is another example of correctly portrayed Ming fashion. This was a hat worn by commoners.

Furniture and Rugs

Furniture in ancestor portraits is limited to chairs, footrests, tables, and standing screens. As mentioned in chapter 2, the most common seat in Chinese ancestor portraits is a roundbacked chair with footrest (see fig. 2.7). This type of chair was a seat of honor, but its ubiquitous appearance in ancestor portraits suggests that chairs were often imaginary props. Only the rich could actually have afforded roundbacked chairs, yet they appear in portraits commissioned at the low end of the social scale.

The decoration on many such chairs is also fanciful. Most are shown lacquered in a technique called *tixi* (or *guri* in Japanese). This describes a process of applying multiple layers of lacquer in alternating bands of red and black to create a thick surface into which an artisan carves a pommel-scroll design, thereby revealing the hidden bands of red (see figs 5.8, 6.7, 6.8). *Tixi*-lacquered chairs often appear in all but the least-expensive portraits (the pattern no doubt took too long to paint for a modest price). If *tixi* chairs were indeed as plentiful in the Ming and Qing as the paintings might suggest, it is odd that modern historians have not located a single extant example, although *tixi* trays, boxes, and small items of furniture are available.

Tixi lacquer is so time-consuming to produce that it was generally reserved for luxury goods smaller than chairs. Song dynasty paintings show chairs and tables decorated in *tixi*, but owing to their fragility no actual examples survive. Yet if *tixi* chairs were common as recently as the Qing dynasty, some of them should still exist. It thus seems likely that representations of *tixi* chairs in ancestor portraits are merely artistic conventions. By the Qing dynasty, these pieces of furniture were fictitious luxury goods associated with wealth, status, and admiration of antique styles.

Some other chairs that appear in ancestor portraits do resemble known types of furniture. For example, a dense wood-grain pattern on a chair simulates the appearance of expensive *huanghuali* rosewood, which was a popular furniture material in elite society (see fig. 5.9). Other chairs are colored dark purple (suggestive of *zitan* rosewood, the most highly esteemed wood; see figs. 4.5–4.7). Chairs decorated in black lacquer, with designs inlaid in mother-of-pearl (see fig. 4.3) and cinnabar lacquer chairs with carved designs (see fig. 6.4) both represent well-known, if costly, types of furniture.

Carpets are other items of furnishing that ancestor portraits help illuminate. Floor coverings were luxury goods in China typically put on display in front of an honored person or brought out for special occasions, so their presence in paintings serves to enhance the stature of the sitters. Carpets appear mostly in large, expensive portraits because their elaborate ornamental designs required a considerable investment of time to paint. Like other details in ancestor portraits, the carpets were also imaginary studio props, rather than personal possessions.

Felt carpets were known in China since at least the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), but knotted wool or silk carpets became significant luxury goods only in the late Ming dynasty, and most palace carpets were made in the latter technique.³² The novelty and sumptuousness of the knotted carpets may have motivated painters to employ a pointillist, or stippled dot, technique to draw attention to the knotted pile. The sun-bright color schemes of the painted carpets are more brilliant than most actual examples, yet because many Chinese dyes are fugitive, the floor coverings in the paintings may offer clues about the original textile palettes.

The scarcity of actual carpets dating to the Ming and early Qing makes it difficult to verify the accuracy of the painted examples, but at least some extant carpets closely resemble the patterns seen in the paintings. Physical counterparts can be found for the carpet in *Portrait of Daišan* (see fig. 6.4), including an example dated to the seventh century in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.³³ The designs of a number of carpets in the Sackler's paintings resemble fragments of Ming palace carpets, although the museum's paintings depict Qing courtiers. Using earlier carpet styles might be analogous to painting Song dynasty-style *tixi* lacquer chairs.

Artisans in Qing workshops probably consulted pattern books to reproduce the designs of Ming imperial carpets for their affluent customers. Standard Ming features include distinctive bi- or tripart borders for the carpets consisting of patterns such as a band of squared key-frets bounded by three solid-colored stripes. Qing portraits of lower-ranking officials often show carpets with a large, meandering floral pattern and narrow borders that display a taste unconnected to the tradition of palace carpets. Workshops producing paintings for less-well-connected clients used different pattern books than did artists working for society's titled elite.

It is a fair conclusion that ancestor portraits document the physical world but not as accurately as might be expected. Anachronistic details are certainly one major obstacle in trying to rely on the visual information in the portraits. Moreover, artists were encouraged to use dazzling colors, a stock of rich ornamental details, and imaginary props to enhance the prestigious appearance of the ancestors. Furnishings in a portrait do not have to be real, nor do they have to represent current fashions—they only have to be luxurious status objects. It would seem, therefore, that “reality” is a relative concept in the realm of ancestor portraits. •

5

Portraits at the Qing Court

this chapter describes the social milieu of many of the subjects whose portraits are in the Sackler's collection. They were members of a cosmopolitan court that revealed in its ability to attract artisans and painters from Europe as well as from Asia. The Qing dynasty (1644–1911) originated in northeast Asia, outside the Great Wall that traditionally divided the sedentary agrarian societies of East Asia from the pastoral tribes inhabiting the steppe and the hunting-fishing economy of the Siberian forests. After conquering the Ming dynasty, which had ruled China proper from 1368 to 1644, these northeast peoples founded an empire that was to endure until 1911 (map 1).

The Manchus

The conquerors were originally known as Jurchen, after the rulers of north China during the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). The name “Manchu” was coined in 1635 by their leader Hongtaiji (1592–1643), and became further defined by imperial fiat in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (fig. 5.1). Of the three distinct Jurchen groups in the sixteenth century, the westernmost Jianzhou Jurchen who led the Qing conquest had already adopted a sedentary, agrarian way of life yet still continued to raise livestock, hunt, and train its youth in mounted archery.

Like the Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongols, who came from outside East Asia to conquer the Chinese-speaking population within the Great Wall, the Manchus tried to perpetuate their own identity through cultural policies. The rulers commissioned a written

language for their tongue in the first decades of the seventeenth century and made Manchu one of the two official languages of the Qing state. Rather than encourage all subjects within the empire to learn Chinese and adopt Confucian principles, they preserved and supported the separate languages and cultures of important Inner Asian peoples, such as the Mongols, Tibetans, and Uighurs (Turkic-speaking Muslim peoples living in the Tarim Basin).

Qing emperors sponsored large-scale translation projects that introduced to new audiences not only Chinese learning but also Tibetan Buddhist scriptures.¹ The Qianlong emperor, whose reign (1736–96) coincided with the acquisition of an empire larger than the current People’s Republic of China, articulated an ideology of universal monarchy that represented a new political synthesis.² The theory envisioned a culturally pluralistic society of diverse peoples, held together at its apex by the universal monarch himself.

A thangka in the Freer Gallery of Art depicting the Qianlong emperor as Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom, exemplifies the imperial claims embodied in Qing patronage of Tibetan Buddhism (figs. 5.2, 5.3). The painting, one of eight known to exist with a similar iconography, places the emperor within the spiritual lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.³ Resembling, in the depiction of the emperor’s face, other known paintings by the Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione, the thangka is an outstanding example of the synthetic Sino-Western painting style developed at the Qing court.⁴

The exquisite beauty of the Freer thangka enhances what was also a politically significant religious work aimed at the Mongol and Tibetan subjects of the empire.

Map 1
Qing dynasty empire, ca. 1820

5.1

Portrait of Hongtaiji (1592–1643)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Title slip in English reads in part:

Emperor Tai Tsung . . . in a summer cap
. . . out of mount

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 165.2 x 97.1 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.63

This portrait allegedly depicts “Emperor Tai Tsung” (Taizong), who is also known by the name Hongtaiji. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the accuracy of this claim because few portraits of the ruler exist. His facial features here only vaguely resemble those in a portrait of Hongtaiji as an older man after having assumed the throne, which is housed in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing. But his appearance does not diverge so far as to make it impossible that they are the same man. Based on style, this painting would have been made long after Hongtaiji’s death. So if it does represent him, the artist had no firsthand knowledge of the sitter, who, judging from the clothing and setting, must have been a member of the imperial family. A five-clawed, imperial dragon roundel, which is difficult to see in the reproduction, appears on the wearer’s chest.

The pose of sitting on a cushioned *kang* (built-in, heated platform) and fingering a Buddhist rosary (which resembles a court necklace) is one assumed by several of the Qing emperors in their portraits. The rosary interjects a note of spirituality into the painting, and the informality of the pose also indicates that the portrait was not created for ritual veneration.

*The Qianlong Emperor as the
Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī*

Imperial workshop, with face by
Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining;
1688–1766)

Qing dynasty, mid-18th century
Inscription in Tibetan: Wise Mañjuśrī,
king of the dharma, lord who
manifests as the leader of men. May
your feet remain firmly on the Vajra
Throne. May you have the good
fortune that your wishes are
spontaneously achieved.
Unmounted thangka; ink and color
on silk; image only, 113.6 x 64.3 cm
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C.;
purchase, anonymous donor and
museum funds, £2000.4

This painting attests to the
multiculturalism of the Qing court.
The emperor is portrayed in the
center of a traditional Tibetan-style
religious painting; the exquisite
modeling around the nose and the
softly shaded mouth, on the other
hand, show European influence in
the work of Giuseppe Castiglione, an
Italian Jesuit residing at the Chinese
court. The thangka proclaims the
Qianlong emperor to be an
embodiment of Mañjuśrī and a
*dharma*raja, or ruler of the Buddhist
faith; it thus lays claim to rulership
of both the spiritual and secular
worlds. As the bodhisattva, the
emperor raises his right hand in the
gesture of argument while
supporting the wheel of the law in
his left. He also holds two stems of
lotus blossoms, which serve as
platforms for a sutra and a sword,
the attributes of Mañjuśrī. He is
pictured among 108 deities (an
auspicious number in Buddhism)
who represent his Buddhist lineage.
In the roundel directly above the
nimbus surrounding the emperor's
image sits his Tibetan Buddhist
teacher, Rol pa'i rdo rje. The
landscape depicts auspicious clouds
and the five peaks of Wutaishan, a
sacred mountain in China. Tiny stitch
holes around the perimeter of the
painting indicate that a thangka-
style mounting was originally sewn
to the painting.

Its meanings lie on several levels. The Tibetan Buddhist iconography, which is duplicated in the bas-reliefs ornamenting the Qianlong emperor's underground tomb, supports other documentary evidence of his personal commitment to the religion. On another level, the thangkas presenting the Qing ruler as "reincarnation of Mañjuśrī, sublime lord, who makes the world prosper" were part of the Qing imperial patronage of this deity, whose worship centered on the sacred pilgrimage site of Wutaishan.⁵ Superimposition of the emperor's image onto the worship of Mañjuśrī at Wutaishan represents the culmination of a court-sponsored image-making project that began during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722). The thangka's depiction of the emperor in the form of a major bodhisattva suggests that secular and religious authority could be merged within his form. In contrast to the classic lama-patron model of dual rule that had governed relations between Tibetan religious prelates and secular rulers, the Dalai Lama and the Qing emperor now adhered to a new model of ruler-bodhisattva that transcended the former bifurcation of the religious and lay worlds.⁶ The thangka thus marks a new conceptual phase in the articulation of Tibetan Buddhist and Qing relations.

Many aspects of the Qing court stemmed from the self-identity of the rulers. Qing emperors chose to divide their time among multiple residences. Their primary capital, Peking, had also served four earlier regimes as a capital city. Unlike the Ming but in the tradition of the Liao (916–1125), Jin, and Yuan (1279–1368) conquest dynasties, Manchu emperors adhered to a pattern of seasonal sojourns. Beginning in the Kangxi reign, they spent much of their time in Peking's northeast suburbs, where they erected luxurious villas with splendid gardens. One of the most extravagant of these, the Yuanmingyuan, was embellished during the 1740s and 1750s with buildings in the European architectural style. Although the buildings were destroyed by European troops in 1860, their ruins are reminiscent of the striking European arch that fills the backdrop of the portrait of Hongyan, Prince Guo (1733–1765), which is in the Sackler's collection (fig. 5.4).

In addition, the rulers created a summer capital located north of the Great Wall on the boundary of the steppe. At Rehe (renamed Chengde after 1820), they enjoyed respite from Peking's summer heat, and in the autumn they and their Mongol nobles took part in large-scale hunts in the adjoining imperial preserve of Mulan, 117 kilometers north of Rehe.⁷ Rehe was also where Qing rulers met with Tibetan Buddhist prelates. Here, as in Peking, they built temples dedicated to Tibetan Buddhism. In the Sackler's collection there is a portrait of an unidentified man riding on horseback across a marble bridge (fig. 5.5). The bridge is identifiable as the Imperial Canal Bridge, which separates the North and Central lakes in the imperial city, because the famous White Pagoda is visible in the upper right corner of the painting, rising above an assemblage of other temples erected on a small island in the middle of North Lake. The White Pagoda was a well-known Tibetan Buddhist landmark in Peking.

Qing Peking was a city of walls within walls. The Qing adopted the "double capital" model of earlier conquest states and divided the Ming capital into two. The northern half of the city, surrounding the imperial palace, became the designated quarter for the banner troops. The banners were large civil-military units, created during the first

5.3

Detail, *The Qianlong Emperor as the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī*

Portrait of Hongyan, Prince Guo (1733–1765)

Qing dynasty, late 18th century

Title slip in English: Hung Chan Sitting in

Front of Portico in Yuan Ming Yuan

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 221.1 x 103.7 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.47

The frontal-orientation and unflinching gaze of the figure are standard features in ancestor portraits, but the choice of the European architectural backdrop indicates that this painting was created during Hongyan's life as a special commemorative image. The setting suggests that Hongyan was honored in his life by visiting the Yuanmingyuan, an imperial villa built by his half brother, the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–96). It included a famous European-style palace. The backdrop could, however, merely be a fictional conceit. Anyone who saw this painting would have understood the architectural reference because such buildings were rare in eighteenth-century China.

Hongyan's chair appears to be made of precious *zitan* rosewood and its style incorporates European-inspired features. The palmate scrolls on the carpet also indicate European taste, further supporting a connection with the European palace at Yuanmingyuan. Finally, the painting style itself incorporates European-influenced chiaroscuro, with striking use of light and shadow on the prince's face, on the drapery folds, and in the landscape painting. This painting boasts an element of "foreign exoticism," which was a fashion of the day and would have spoken well of Hongyan's elite position in society; his luxurious fur coat also announces wealth and status.

A portrait of the prince as a younger man is also in the Sackler's collection (see appendix 1 fig. 1).

5.5

Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor in front of the White Pagoda

Qing dynasty, 18th century or later

Spurious seals of Giuseppe Castiglione

(Lang Shining; 1688–1766)

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 255.9 x 135.3 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, \$1991.60

The face of the equestrian figure resembles the Qianlong emperor, and the pocket watch suspended from his belt alludes to his passion for Western watches, but it is not certain that this painting was indeed created for the emperor. Two fake Castiglione seals add a note of suspicion to the circumstances surrounding the creation of this painting, but they could have been added by a twentieth-century dealer to a genuine but anonymous court painting. What is more troubling is the informality of the emperor's pose. It is unlikely that the Qianlong emperor would have ridden in the imperial city without a large entourage. But the Qing court produced many paintings of emperors ostensibly enjoying themselves that prove to have been contrived situations. Such paintings helped an emperor tailor a persona he wanted to project to the court audience entitled to view portraits of him. That may be the case here. The presence of the White Pagoda reflects his Tibetan leanings.

half of the seventeenth century, in which all members of the conquest group were enrolled. Banners were made up of companies, each consisting (at least in theory) of three hundred warriors and their dependents. Manchus, Mongols, Chinese, and others who joined the Jurchen/Manchu cause before 1644 were incorporated into the banners, which functioned as administrative and military units. The eight Manchu banners organized in 1616 expanded to include eight Mongol banners by 1635 and eight Hanjun or Chinese-martial banners by 1642. The conquest of Ming territories was achieved by these multiethnic forces.

By 1644, when the banner troops entered Peking, Manchu society was highly stratified. At the pinnacle of the society were the kinsmen of Nurgaci, the founder of the Aisin Gioro, or imperial lineage. All of the banner lords were imperial kinsmen. Below them were the banner nobles, a small, privileged elite whose high status stemmed from their military prowess. Most bannermen were free men, and they served under the banner nobles, who occupied the leadership posts. A growing number of prisoners of war were enslaved and registered in companies under the banners and became the hereditary bondservants.

Bondservants—*boo*i, the Manchu term for this status group, means “belonging to the household”—were also recorded in the banner household registers. They occupied a lowly status at the bottom of Manchu society and were treated in some ways very much like slaves, who were called *aha* in Manchu. Both *aha* and *boo*i were legally defined servile groups in the Qing dynasty. Whereas *aha* worked in fields, *boo*i were in domestic service. In the conquest period, some *boo*i fought in battle alongside their masters and on occasion were freed as a reward for their valor. For most of the dynasty, however, bondservants were registered in separate banner companies and were prohibited from marrying free bannermen’s children.

Precisely because of their low status, however, bondservants registered in the emperor’s upper three banners—the Bordered Yellow, Plain Yellow, and Plain White—were used by the emperor for a variety of important tasks. The Kangxi emperor sent specially trusted bondservants to strategic locales in the Yangzi Delta to serve as his eyes and ears. Their confidential reports on local politics and official corruption provided information that often did not come through normal bureaucratic channels. Bondservants also supervised eunuchs in the powerful Imperial Household Department, the agency managing the emperor’s personal property. Since the agency’s activities included investment in certain kinds of foreign trade and foreign relations, bondservants could in actuality be extremely powerful individuals.⁸ Moreover, despite the formal prohibition against marriages between bondservants and bannermen, bondservant’s daughters who were recruited as maidservants for the palace were sometimes promoted into the imperial harem and gave birth to princes. Empress Xiaogong was the daughter of a bondservant and entered the palace as a maidservant (a portrait alleged to be her is in the Sackler’s collection, appendix 1 fig. 15). She bore the Kangxi emperor three sons and three daughters but remained a third-rank imperial consort until her son ascended the throne as the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35). It was he who promoted her to the rank of empress dowager.⁹

Table 5.1 Qing Imperial Princely Ranks

1	<i>Heshe qinwang</i> , Manchu <i>hošoi cin wang</i> . Prince of the Blood of the first rank.
2	<i>Dolo junwang</i> , Manchu <i>doroi junwang</i> . Prince of the Blood of the second rank.
3	<i>Dolo beile</i> , Manchu <i>doroi beile</i> . Prince of the Blood of the third rank.
4	<i>Gushan beizi</i> , Manchu <i>gūsai beise</i> . Prince of the Blood of the fourth rank.
5	<i>Feng'en zhenguo gong</i> , Manchu <i>kesi be tuwakiyara gurun be dalire gung</i> . Prince of the Blood of the fifth rank.
6	<i>Feng'en fuguo gong</i> , Manchu <i>kesi be tuwakiyara gurun be aisilara gung</i> . Prince of the Blood of the sixth rank.
7	<i>Buru bafen zhenguo gong</i> . Prince of the Blood of the seventh rank.
8	<i>Buru bafen fuguo gong</i> . Prince of the Blood of the eighth rank.
9–11	<i>Zhenguo jiangjun</i> . Noble of the imperial lineage of the ninth rank, grades one through three.
12–14	<i>Fuguo jiangjun</i> . Noble of the imperial lineage of the tenth rank, grades one through three.
15–17	<i>Fengguo jiangjun</i> . Noble of the imperial lineage of the eleventh rank, grades one through three.
18	<i>Feng'en jiangjun</i> . Noble of the imperial lineage of the twelfth rank.

Source: H. S. Brunnert and V. V. Hagelstrom, *Present-Day Political Organization of China*, trans. A Beltchenko and E. E. Moran (Foochow: n.p., 1911), 5–7

The Imperial Nobility

The ranking system for imperial kinsmen evolved after 1636. Men born into the Aisin Gioro, or imperial lineage, were recorded in a separate imperial genealogy and organized under “lineage heads” in each Manchu banner. Descendants of Nurgaci and his brothers, the “main line,” were distinguished from and favored over other descendants of the apical ancestor, Nurgaci’s grandfather. The dynasty initially gave state subsidies to every male descendant, but the growth of the imperial lineage during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stimulated sharp reductions in these payments. What emerged was a lean aristocracy with a few privileged and wealthy princes but many impoverished descendants. During the conquest era, merit was the primary basis for rewards and honors. Later, during the eighteenth century, the Qianlong emperor reaffirmed the martial heritage of his ancestors by sharply favoring descendants of the most famous conquest heroes.

The rank system for imperial kinsmen eventually expanded into a hierarchy encompassing eighteen ranks (table 5.1). Princes of the first rank, *hošoi cin wang*, received an annual stipend of ten thousand Chinese ounces of silver and five thousand piculs (approximately 275 tons) of rice, while princes of the lowest rank received slightly more than 1 percent of these figures. Second-rank princes, *hošoi jun wang*, and first-rank princes were given names (*hao*; see chapter 4) along with their titles; these two groups of princes were also the only ones to automatically receive posthumous names (*shi*) when they died.¹⁰

The imperial princes were further divided by the so-called eight privileges. Only princes in the first six ranks enjoyed the following rights: to wear a red knotted button, a three-eyed peacock feather, or an embroidered dragon badge on court robes (fig. 5.6); to have red-painted spears posted at the gate of their mansions, to attach tassels to their horse’s accoutrements, and to use purple bridle reins; to have a servant carry a special teapot; and to have a special carpet on which to sit.¹¹

Since the privilege of perpetual inheritance was limited to a very small group, most princely houses experienced downward social mobility. An emperor’s son might be granted a first- or second-degree principedom, but that title would be reduced by one grade with each subsequent generation. By the end of the dynasty, only 1 percent of Aisin Gioro descendants of the “main line” held princely titles. Of that group, less than a quarter were members of the upper nobility, who enjoyed substantial income and privileges as a result of their rank. The Qing imperial princes were thus a tiny elite, especially when compared with the Ming princes.¹²

Banner Nobles

Next to the imperial kinsmen were the banner nobles. The most favored Manchu and Mongol nobles were descendants of conquest-era heroes, comrades of Nurgaci who had won leadership positions through their loyalty and valor. Their military titles were translated into titles of nobility in 1634. During the Shunzhi reign (1644–61), a system of hereditary titles was devised with twenty separate ranks. Later, in 1736

5.6

Dragon roundel

Qing dynasty, ca. 1830–50

Embroidery; silk and metallic threads on silk; diameter, 28 cm

Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson

Photograph by Charles Rumph

A five-clawed dragon is couched in gold and silver threads above three mountain peaks and a billowing ocean. The dragon’s body is wrapped around a flaming pearl, which is a symbol for wisdom and purity. This roundel would have been displayed on a robe worn by a member of the imperial family.

and 1752, the nobility expanded to twenty-seven ranks, with the first fifteen being the most important.

Although the privilege of perpetual inheritance was granted to several noble houses, most experienced downward mobility. Each noble rank could be inherited for only a specified number of generations, with the highest rank, a dukedom, being normally transmitted twenty-six times. More important, Qing emperors favored descendants of the conquest heroes for official appointments, took their daughters as imperial brides, and gave them imperial brides in exchange. Similar favors were lavished upon the nobles belonging to the eastern Mongol tribes, who had allied with the Manchus in the first half of the seventeenth century. Although some nobles of the Khalkha Mongol tribes, latecomers to the Qing alliance, were favored with imperial brides and high office, others were kept under close scrutiny.

The banners were multiethnic in composition — besides Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese, there were Koreans from the northeast, Russians captured in the Albazin campaign (1685), and even some Tibetans (in 1776). All these individuals, from imperial princes down to the *boo*i, were subject to banner laws, which were distinct from the regulations that applied to the subjugated Ming population. There was also a dress code, for women as well as men. Bannermen were forbidden to marry with the conquered Chinese population. Initially, they were supported by the government, which settled them in garrisons at strategic points in the empire and on agricultural lands in northeast and north China.

Qing Peking

The spatial division of Peking, which occurred by edict in 1648, reflected a major political division in Qing society, between the conquerors on the one hand and the subjugated Ming population on the other (map 2). The northern section, or Inner City, was the residence of the bannermen; the southern part, or Outer City, became the quarter for the subjugated Han Chinese population. The same policy of residential segregation was implemented throughout the empire, so that bannermen lived in separate walled quarters within Chinese cities. Despite gradual acculturation — bannermen who lived in garrisons in China Proper eventually lost the ability to speak the Manchu language — bannermen remained a distinctive population in the eyes of Han Chinese.

Although the life of the court centered on events taking place in the Inner City, the Outer City became the commercial heart of the capital, with approximately six or seven hundred shops in 1744, a century after the Manchu takeover. Merchants came from all parts of the empire to do business in Peking, and the Outer City was full of native-place associations (*huiguan*) that provided meeting places and hostels for scholars, officials, and traders.¹³ The eighteenth-century “Four Treasures” project of the Qianlong reign, infamous for its so-called inquisition and purge of politically suspect authors and books, was nonetheless a magnet that drew large numbers of scholars to the capital, thus stimulating the emergence of Liulichang, the famous book and antiques district. Bannermen went to the Outer City to escape close regulation and patronize the popular pleasure districts (including brothels) that developed there.

The Inner City was the center of Qing government. Here were housed the central government agencies. Within the Inner City, itself surrounded by a wall nearly two meters thick, almost five meters high, and thirteen kilometers in circumference, lay the imperial city. The horse stables, storehouses, workshops, and offices of the Imperial Household Department and the residences of the imperial family were all located inside the imperial city. The city was dominated by three lakes — North Lake, Central Lake, and South Lake — each ornamented with pavilions, temples, and halls. The Temple of the Ancestors (Taimiao), the second-ranked altar in the state rituals, and the Altar of Land and Grain (Shejitan), were also in the imperial city, just south of the imperial palace.

The place known as the Forbidden City (Zijincheng) was the walled compound in the heart of the imperial city, the imperial palace, and so called because access to it was strictly controlled. Simultaneously the emperor’s administrative headquarters, his residence, and the center for diverse activities supervised by the Imperial Household Department, the Forbidden City was itself divided into a public, or outer, court (*waichao*), and the private quarters of the emperor and his family, the Great Interior. Whereas audiences with ambassadors and officials took place in the courtyards and massive public halls dominating the outer court, the inner court was a space that only a handful of selected high officials and princes were

Map 2
Qing dynasty Peking

permitted to enter, with the exception of servants who worked there—eunuchs, maids, and others.

Life in the Inner Court

Unlike the practice in earlier dynasties, when the inner court seems to have been used strictly for domestic purposes, Qing rulers from the late seventeenth century onward used the Qianqing Palace and other halls inside the Great Interior as offices for the conduct of routine business. Since most officials were not permitted to enter these precincts, one might think such an arrangement would be extremely inconvenient. In actuality, moving state business inside permitted the rulers to ignore bureaucratic rules when selecting close advisers. Although some Han Chinese degree-winners indeed rose to high office, they did not monopolize the state agencies wielding decision-making powers. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, banner nobles and imperial kinsmen often participated in these inner-court deliberations, and such individuals continued to play decision-making roles into the late nineteenth century.

The inner court was also the residence of the imperial consorts. Narrow alleys crisscrossed the spaces to the east and west of the central axis occupied by the Qianqing Palace, defining a grid of small, walled courtyards in which the empress dowager, empress, and consorts resided. Many of these living spaces were less elaborate than those of wealthy commoners. The informality and human scale of the buildings contrasted sharply with the impersonality and massiveness of the public halls, as can be seen in the idealized representations of domestic life within the palace known as *xingle tu*. Arranged like commoner residences so that each room faced south into interior courtyards, the rooms in the palace were probably much more comfortable for their residents than were the living quarters in the huge and drafty palaces of Europe in the same period.

The Imperial Family

The Qing prohibition of marriage between bannermen and the civilian Han Chinese population also applied to imperial marriages. Although the actual document has not been found among official records, imperial edicts from the Kangxi reign onward reiterated this prohibition, and for the most part it seems to have been obeyed.¹⁴ Instead, the court selected brides for imperial princes from distinguished banner families and from the Mongol nobility.

When the daughters of banner officials reached the age of twelve or thirteen, they were presented at the palace in Peking. The “beautiful women” (*xiunü*) inspection, which took place once every three years, meant that the imperial lineage got first choice of marriageable bannerwomen. Some girls were chosen to be consorts of princes, or of the emperor himself; others were appointed as ladies-in-waiting, serving a five-year term. Ladies-in-waiting who caught the emperor’s eye might be promoted into the harem. Yet other women, from banner families of bondservant status, might enter the palace through the annual draft for palace maids and eventually win promotion into the harem.

During the first half of the Qing dynasty, emperors tended to have numerous consorts. The Kangxi emperor, for example, had at least fifty-four consorts; his grandson the Qianlong emperor had forty-one. Several paintings in the Sackler's collection are said to depict imperial consorts. But the nineteenth-century rulers were quite different. They had not only fewer consorts but also fewer sons. The Kangxi emperor had thirty-four sons; his great-grandson, the Jiaqing emperor (reigned 1796–1820) had only four; and the Xianfeng emperor (reigned 1851–61) had only one. None of the last three Qing emperors had any children.

The ranking system for women evolved after 1636. Eventually the emperor's consorts were differentiated into eight ranks. The empress was of course the first in rank, and there could be only one empress at a time. She was followed in rank by the *huang-guifei*, then in descending order by the *guifei*, *fei*, *pin*, *guiren*, *changzai*, and *daying*. The food, clothing, jewelry, stipends, and number of maids allocated to each consort were specified and graduated by rank.

To some extent, rank was correlated with the status of the woman's family. Women occupying the top ranks tended to come from families of high status, while women in the lowest ranks generally came from bondservant families. But the ranks of imperial consorts depended ultimately upon the emperor's favor—and the woman's fertility. While it is true that low-ranking consorts who did not bear children tended to disappear from imperial records (just as they probably faded from the court society as they aged), a low-ranking consort who captured the emperor's eye could win not only promotion but also the ultimate prize, the throne for her son.

Unlike the Ming, the Qing did not automatically select the eldest son of the empress as the heir apparent, and because all sons were eligible to succeed to the throne, women of low social status could occasionally find themselves in the enviable position of having their sons ascend the throne. Usually one of the first acts of a new emperor would be to promote his own mother to the rank of empress dowager. Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) is an outstanding example of a low-ranking consort who achieved this honor, and she is not the only one to have done so.

Emperor's daughters occupied a peculiar position in Qing court life. Unlike other women, they retained strong ties to their natal families throughout their lives. Like the daughters of imperial princes, they received one of seven ranks that entitled them to stipends and privileges. These titles, normally presented to a woman when she married, also determined the title her husband would hold. The stipends that sons-in-law received were determined by their wife's rank.

Daughters were used to cement political alliances, and emperors favored Mongol sons-in-law. A significant part of the Manchu conquest must be credited to its alliances with Mongol tribes.¹⁵ Sons-in-law became part of an elaborate social network, created to integrate Mongolia into the empire. Although some princesses were given permission to reside in the capital, many went to live in Mongolia with their husbands, visiting Peking at regulated intervals.

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, compounds within the inner court also housed the emperor's sons and many of his grandsons. All imperial princes were required to reside in the capital, Peking. From 1712 onward, the Qing

emperors refused to designate an heir apparent. Theoretically all sons were eligible to inherit the throne, and their abilities were tested through administrative, military, and diplomatic assignments. Thus, in stark contrast to the preceding Ming dynasty, the Qing rulers took care to educate all of their sons so that each might be capable of ruling. In the early eighteenth century, a palace school was established within the inner court. There were also classrooms in several of the imperial villas in the Peking suburbs so that instruction would not be interrupted when the emperor and his family moved.

The curriculum at the palace school included lessons in the Confucian classics (in Chinese) and in Manchu and Mongolian language, and instruction in riding, archery, and other military skills. The instructors included degree-winners whose outstanding performance on the palace examinations had won them appointments in the Hanlin Academy, a government agency charged with various literary and intellectual tasks; banner officers, whose prowess in mounted archery had attracted the imperial eye; and specialists in the Inner Asian languages. Classes were held from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. throughout the year. There was no fixed term, and many princes seem to have continued their studies well past the age of adulthood, even after they were married.

When they entered the palace school, the young princes left the women's quarters and moved into "boy's houses." Sometimes several princes lived together in a compound or were separately housed with their personal staff. Each prince received a monthly allowance from the moment he was born. This allowance was raised when he entered school and when he married.

Perhaps because of the enormous cost, rulers during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended to delay the date at which they gave their sons the estates, men, and stipends required to set up separate households. Many married sons who had been given princely titles continued to live within the Forbidden City with their families. Yongyan was thirty-five years old when he ascended the throne as the Jiaqing emperor but had never been given a princely mansion before he was selected to succeed his father. Yongyan's successor, Minning (reigned 1821–50), also never moved into a princely establishment before ascending the throne as the Daoguang emperor at the age of forty-seven. As a result, the Qing court during this period housed an extended family of several generations; brothers and cousins grew up and attended school together.

Manchu Court Dress

Manchu clothing, Manchu language, and mounted archery became defining markers of the Qing dynasty. Although the language and mounted archery were requisites only for bannermen, Manchu clothing affected not only banner families but also Han Chinese officials, since it was the court dress.

From the conquest era, Manchu rulers had identified their distinctive traditional dress as an important component of their power. The fundamental features of Manchu dress echoed the needs of steppe peoples. Hoods provided insulation for the head from the cold northeast Asian winters. Long, tight sleeves ended in cuffs shaped like horses'

5-7.

Summer *chaofu*

Qing dynasty, 19th century

Silk gauze with embroidery; silk and metallic threads; length 141 x width (cuff to cuff) 170 cm

Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson

Photograph by Charles Rumph

Relatively few *chaofu* survive, both because of the small size of the population that earned the right to wear them and because officials often chose to be buried in them, as they were their most precious garments.

hooves to protect the back of the hands from the wind. The high collar and asymmetrical closures also protected against the wind, while the slashed openings of the Manchu coat enabled the wearer to move freely on horseback. Trousers, worn by men and women, protected the wearer's legs from the horse's flanks and the elements. Boots with rigid soles allowed riders to stand in the iron stirrups, enabling them to shoot with greater force and accuracy.

It was Hongtaiji who made a direct connection between the traditional clothing and martial vigor. In 1636 and 1637, Hongtaiji exhorted the princes and officials to "always remember" that Manchu achievements were founded on riding and archery. Pointing to the decline of the Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, Hongtaiji worried that his descendants would forget the sources of their greatness and adopt Chinese customs.

Although the frontal pose of the portraits conceals it, Manchu men shaved their foreheads and wore the remaining hair tied in a queue. This north Asian hairstyle was very different from the Ming mode, in which men combed long hair into elaborate arrangements hidden under caps. The Manchu hairstyle was imposed on the subjugated Ming population in 1645 and stimulated intense resistance in parts of the lower Yangzi Delta.

Portrait of an Unidentified Courtier
in front of a Table
Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 229.7 x 162.6 cm
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Smithsonian Collections Acquisition
Program and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.126

The figure is unidentified, but judging from his especially luxurious fur-trimmed *chaofu* and red-jeweled cap ornament he was a man of great stature. The last owner of this painting, Richard G. Pritzlaff, thought the man was the conquest leader Dorgon, who appears in appendix 1 figure 31. Dorgon has similar, large circular earlobes, which are considered a sign of sagacity, but otherwise the two men look quite different. The identity of this man is probably irretrievable. This portrait was not likely to have been created as an ancestor portrait because the setting is so richly detailed, but in many ways it is close enough in style to an ancestor portrait that it may have been used for informal family veneration of the sitter.

The dress code for bannerwomen forbade them from adopting the Chinese custom of foot-binding. Since many Manchu women rode on horseback and engaged in hunting, the crippling resulting from foot-binding was obviously detrimental. Bannerwomen were also barred from wearing wide-sleeved Ming-style dresses and single earrings. They wore three earrings in each ear. Although the dress code was not always obeyed—imperial edicts complain of infringements from the middle of the eighteenth century onward—the portraits indicate that many bannerwomen did follow traditional customs.

Court robes were a variant of Manchu traditional dress. Court clothing evolved from 1636, when Hongtaiji took on a dynastic name and began to model many aspects of his government on Ming precedents. Codified in 1759, the dress regulations were modified in practice but continued to exist until the end of the dynasty. The color of the robes and the decorative motifs such as dragons (and the twelve symbols that could adorn only the ruler’s most formal robes) were dictated by an individual’s rank.¹⁶ Table 5.2 presents regulations concerning robe color for court robes in the 1759 code. Although revised in 1899 in some respects, the essential status boundaries that were defined by color remained the same. Only the emperor, empress dowager, empress, and first-rank consort could wear bright yellow (*minghuang*) robes; imperial sons wore robes in other shades of yellow, while other princes and imperial kinsmen wore blue or blue-black robes.¹⁷ Exceptions to the color regulations were always made for robes conferred by the emperor.

Table 5.2 Color Regulation for Court Dress in 1759

male rank	colors	female rank	colors
Emperor	bright yellow (<i>minghuang</i>)	Empress Dowager	bright yellow
Heir Apparent	orange-yellow (<i>henghuang</i>)	Empress	bright yellow
Imperial Sons	golden yellow (<i>jinhuang</i>)	Consort, 1st rank	bright yellow
Princes, 1st–2d ranks	blue, blue-black (<i>shiqing</i>)	Consort, 2d rank	golden yellow
Princes, 3d–4th ranks	blue, blue-black	Consort, 3d rank	golden yellow
Other Nobles	blue, blue-black	Consort, 4th rank	tawny yellow (<i>xiangse</i>)
Officials, 1st–3d ranks	blue, blue-black	Wife of heir	orange-yellow
Officials, 4th–6th ranks	blue, blue-black	Wives and daughters of imperial sons and princes, 1st and 2d ranks; princesses, 1st–2d ranks	tawny yellow
Officials, 7th–9th ranks	blue, blue-black	Wives and daughters of other princes, nobles, and officials, 1st–3d ranks	blue, blue-black
		Wives and daughters of officials, 4th–7th ranks	blue, blue-black

Sources: Adapted from Schuyler V. R. Cammann, *China’s Dragon Robes* (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), appendices C, D, and E, 193–95. Original text of *Huang chao liqi tushi*, ed. Yinlu et al., 1759, reprinted in *Jing yin Jin zao tang Siku quanshu huiyao*, vol. 201 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1988).

Portrait of Shang Kexi (d. 1676)

Qing dynasty, 19th–early 20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image, 188.9 x 117.0 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.81

Based entirely on what Richard Pritzlaff was told when he acquired this portrait dating from the nineteenth to early twentieth century, it is alleged to depict Shang Kexi, a seventeenth-century conquest-era hero. Families often had reasons to commission portraits long after the death of the sitter. Whoever commissioned this image spared no expense in choosing gold paper of the highest standard to mount above the portrait; curiously it was left uninscribed. When the painting was treated at the Sackler's conservation laboratory, the restorer made a special effort to repair tears in the paper because foil paper of this quality is no longer produced.

Shang is pictured in summer court dress, which is less commonly observed in ancestor portraits than is expensive winter garb, and there is no carpet on the floor. His feet are disproportionately large and seem more inappropriately placed than those in many late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century portraits. The side view of the feet is not, however, as awkward as might first be thought because Chinese etiquette of the period dictated that men sit with their knees turned outward, with feet apart and slightly turned to the side.

The regulations stating which ranks were permitted to wear robes adorned with specified types of dragon changed during the course of the dynasty. The right to wear robes decorated with nine five-clawed dragons was initially restricted to the emperor, his sons, and princes of the first and second ranks, but by 1759 only the twelve symbols were reserved for the sole use of the emperor and empress.

The dress code presented three categories of clothing for the court—formal, semi-

formal, and informal (or ordinary). The categories were applicable to all princes, courtiers, and officials of sufficiently high rank whose attendance was required at imperial audiences, court assemblies, or state sacrifices. Court dress (*chaofu*, *lifu*), the most formal attire, “was the most conservative” in “preserving features distinctive to Manchu national costume worn prior to the conquest” (fig. 5.7).¹⁸ Many of the princes and officials whose portraits are in the Sackler’s collection—the first, sixth, and seventh Princes Yi, for example (see figs. 4.5–4.7) are painted in full winter court dress: Yinxiang, the first Prince Yi, is wearing the golden yellow (*jinhuang*) robe of an imperial son, while his descendants are in the blue robes prescribed for first-rank princes. A variant of the winter court robe, one with a wide fur border, is worn by an unidentified courtier (fig. 5.8) and by Lirongbao (see fig. 6.8). The less commonly depicted summer court robe appears in the portrait of Shang Kexi (fig. 5.9).

Formal male court dress (*chaofu*) consisted of a side-fastening robe with a flaring, pleated skirt below the waist. The *chaofu* was worn with a *piling* (wide collar or capelet) over the shoulders that is similar to the same item in female court dress. Men wore a girdle, usually of silk cord, that closed with a jeweled fastening and had attached metal rings from which scarves, pouches, and a sword could be suspended. A looped court necklace (fig. 5.10), hat with gemstone finial, and boots completed the outfit. Any peacock feathers bestowed on an official by the emperor would also be added to the court hat; princes of ranks four through six and the husbands of first- and second-rank princesses wore peacock feathers in their court hats.¹⁹

Not all ancestor portraits display splendid court dress at such a high level of formality. Elegant, semiformal robes that fasten on the side, called *jifu* (literally, festive robe), were also frequently depicted, such as in *Portrait of Prince Hongming* (see fig. 3). The round dragon badge on the chest indicates Hongming’s status as a prince; court officials outside of the imperial family line wore square badges.

When worn without a surcoat, a *jifu* is considered too casual to be depicted in an ancestor portrait—an example is the informally posed portrait of Yinxiang (see fig. 2.15). The skirt of a man’s *jifu* is split front and back, which is a vestigial reminder of clothing originally designed for ease in mounting a horse, but a woman’s robe is not split. The hem of a *jifu* bears a standard design of diagonal, colored stripes topped by billowing clouds, which represents waves and cresting spume. In ancestor portraits, a *jifu* is always shown worn with a surcoat, which heightens the impression of formality and offers information about court rank in the form of a rank badge sewn on the front.

The use of rank badges, or square insignia, was a Ming practice that was continued by the Qing. They were displayed on the surcoat worn with semiformal dress by civil and military officials. Table 5.3 presents a summary of the hierarchy of rank badges. In his portrait, Jalafengge is shown wearing the lion badge, signifying the second military rank (figs. 5.11, 5.12).

Finally, informal portraits also show subjects wearing ordinary dress (*changfu*). The robes worn by Hongtaiji beneath his coat (see fig. 5.1) and by Prince Guo (see fig. 2.13) are examples of *changfu*, garments worn in the inner court and not in public.

Women’s court dress was also regulated by rank and included stipulations regarding not only the symbols on the robes but also their color. Since the court dress code

5.10

Court necklace

Qing dynasty, 19th century

Amber, gemstones, and silk cord

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; 973.32

Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum, ©ROM

Court necklaces were worn with ceremonial attire by nobles and high-ranking officials at court, both men and women. The form of the necklace is derived from the Buddhist rosary—both have 108 beads. Four large beads of contrasting color called either “Buddha heads” or “beads of the four seasons” are placed between each group of twenty-seven beads. Three strands of “counting beads”—ten each—are added to the necklace, with two strands on the man’s left and one on his right, and the reverse for women. A long decorated strap with large pendants hung down the back as an ornament and counterweight. Depending on a person’s wealth, the necklace was made of either genuine gemstones or glass.

Portrait of Jalafengge

(fl. 2d half 19th century)

Qing dynasty, 2d half 19th century

Title slip in English: Jalafengge

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 221.5 x 144.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition

Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, s1991.82

Although we do not know Jalafengge's birth and death dates, we do know that he married the eighth daughter of the Daoguang emperor (reigned 1821–50), Princess Shouxi, in 1863, when both were probably in their twenties. The Western-influenced perspective in this portrait, with its receding ground plane, use of oblique lines, foreshortening, and three-dimensional presence of the body with the sitter's robes hugging his body, suggests a late date. Some of these stylistic elements are already present in eighteenth-century portraits but are treated more emphatically here. In the Sackler's collection, this is one of the most plastically modeled faces, and rarely does a court hat appear to sit so convincingly on a rounded head as in this painting. The sense of an organic link between head, neck, and body is also unusually skillful here.

specified a summer and a winter outfit, either could be worn for a portrait. In reality, however, many more portraits depict their subjects in winter dress. The sumptuous, fur-lined, silk garments and costume accessories that appear in *Portrait of Lady Guan* (see fig. 2.1) exemplify the power of clothing to convey formality and social prestige. The woman is identified in the inscription written in the neat, precise hand of a hired calligrapher that appears above the portrait (see appendix 2 for translation). Lady Guan was the wife of Lieutenant-General Shi (see appendix 1 fig. 38). She earned the honorary title

5.12

Lion badge for second-rank military official
Qing dynasty, 2d half 18th century
Silk tapestry (*kesi*)
26 x 27.3 cm.
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto;
gift of Mrs. Sigmund Samuel, 950.100.316
Photograph from Royal Ontario Museum,
©ROM

Rank badges were used to distinguish the various ranks of civil and military officials, with the latter being assigned animal insignia. The pictorial quality of the composition, its relatively open sense of spacing, and the fluid cloud scrolls help date this piece to the eighteenth century.

Dame-Consort, which entitled her to this costume, every detail of which proclaims her place in the court hierarchy. The total number of dragons on a robe, whether the dragons have four or five claws, and the color of the cloth are examples of the prerogatives of dress that were strictly regulated by the court to accord with rank.

Lady Guan wears full court dress as indicated by her hat, the jeweled diadem around her forehead, and her robes. Over her undergarments she wears a floor-length skirt called a *chaopao*, which is a long court robe with projecting shoulder epaulets. Only the hem of her skirt is visible beneath the robe. On top of the *chaopao*, Lady Guan wears a long sleeveless vest called a *chaogua*. The wide, detachable collar or capelet (*piling*) completes the outfit.

Her court jewelry, which typifies the adornments worn by high-ranking women, consists of several items.²⁰ She wears three earrings in each earlobe, which was the accepted custom for Manchu women. Lady Guan is also outfitted with four necklaces: a gold collar or torque; a long, looped chain; and two beaded chains, worn by crossing them from the left shoulder to the right underarm and vice versa. The diadem, torque, and looped chain each have jeweled streamers attached at the back that are not visible in a frontal portrait. Lady Guan's attire lacks only one detail of formal court costume, the *caishui*, which is a narrow, pointed, silk streamer attached to a front button, as in *Portrait of Lady Wanyan* (see fig. 2).

Women also had garments equivalent to the *jifu*, which could be worn with or without surcoats depending on the level of formality required. *Portrait of Lady Wanyan*

Table 5.3
Hierarchy of Qing Civil and Military Rank Badges

rank	civil officials	military officials
first	crane	qilin (after 1662)
second	golden pheasant	lion
third	peacock	leopard (after 1664)
fourth	goose	tiger (after 1664)
fifth	silver pheasant	bear
sixth	egret	panther
seventh	mandarin duck	rhinoceros (after 1759)
eighth	quail	rhinoceros
ninth	paradise flycatcher	sea horse

Source: Adapted from Schuyler V. R. Cammann, *China's Dragon Robes* (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), appendix F, 196–97.

provides an illustration of this, too. The single-dragon roundel worn on her chest was commensurate with her rank. Higher-ranking women could wear robes decorated with eight roundels, each with five-clawed dragons (fig. 5.13).

Clothing may help support an identification but is rarely able to make it definitive. According to an English-language label on its outside mounting, one of the portraits in the Sackler's collection may be of an "empress," but this identification cannot be confirmed from the clothing or headdress alone (figs. 5.14, 5.15). Two other portraits (see appendix 1 figs. 18, 25) labeled (perhaps spuriously) as "empress dowagers," portray women wearing many (but not all) items of the court dress prescribed for this status; another, of Bumbutai (see appendix 1 fig. 45), the mother of the Shunzhi emperor

5.13

Imperial noblewoman's eight-dragon
roundel summer surcoat
Qing dynasty, ca. 1850
Silk gauze with silk and metallic
thread embroidery
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington,
D.C.; purchase with funds from an
anonymous donor, \$1992.7

Motifs surrounding the dragons on
the robe, including red bats, are
auspicious signs that constitute a
rebus signifying "vast good
fortune." The waves at the hem
are also studded with images of
treasures and symbols of good
fortune.

Portrait of an Imperial Lady

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 204.1 x 156.2 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution,

Washington, D. C.; Smithsonian

Collections Acquisition Program and

partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff,

s1991.75

The subject of this portrait, which lacks both a label and an inscription, cannot be identified, but the dragons that ornament the chair throw, carpet, and the sitter's outer robe, plus the phoenixes pricked out in pearls on her elaborate headdress, hint at imperial connections. The three earrings in each earlobe indicate she is a banner woman. The wearing of a headdress with five phoenixes was a privilege granted only to women of high rank, though it was also customary for ordinary people to adopt this device for wedding headdresses.

It is puzzling that a woman bedecked with so many elements of imperial regalia is not also wearing the court jewelry and accessories that comprise formal court attire. Virtually all of the elements in this portrait, save for the face, appear in another painting in the Sackler's collection, of an older, unidentified woman, whose portrait has been tentatively identified as the Yongzheng emperor's mother (see appendix 1 fig. 15). The two constitute an as-yet-unsolvable mystery: If they were princesses or imperial consorts, why were the women not depicted in formal court dress, despite the adoption of the iconic pose and hieratic gaze typical of ancestor portraits? If the women are not imperial family members, why were they painted with these visual indices of court status? There are intriguing similarities with the *Portrait of Daišan*, which could have been painted in the same workshop (see fig. 6.4). Despite the different carpet patterns, one can speculate that all three of these paintings are part of a set of family members.

5.15

Ornament for a headdress
Qing dynasty, 18th century
Gold, pearls, and stone; 14.0 x 5.7 x 4.5 cm
Portland Museum of Art, Maine; gift of
Joseph and Ruth Sataloff, 1994.39.1
Photograph by Melville D. McLean, from
Portland Museum of Art

(reigned 1644–61), shows a woman in informal dress. Although the portrait noted as being of the “Jiaqing empress” (the Jiaqing emperor actually had two empresses) shows her wearing a “bright yellow” twelve-symbol imperial robe, she lacks the requisite court hat and accessories (see fig. 7.7). As will be discussed in chapter 7, this discrepancy reveals that the painting is a forgery.

Qing court robes were also worn by Tibetan prelates and Mongol nobles. The Qing emperor extended the privilege of wearing five-clawed dragon robes to the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, and Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu of Urga, the three highest dignitaries of Tibetan Buddhism. He bestowed dragon robes upon Mongol nobles, who followed the Qing dress code from 1661. These Mongol nobles and their wives who accepted an imperial princess as a daughter-in-law received court robes as part of the bride’s dowry; sons-in-law also received robes. Mongols seem to have continued to use Qing court robes as festive attire for special occasions even after 1911, when the dynasty ended.²¹

Portraits at Court

Portraits were sometimes commissioned for presentation to heads of states. One example might be the 1404 portrait of Ming Chengzu (reigned 1403–24), the Yongle emperor, in the Potala Palace in Lhasa, which was probably presented to a Tibetan Buddhist prelate during the early fifteenth century, a period when Ming rulers cultivated close relations with Tibet.²² A Qing parallel would be the painting portraying the Qianlong emperor as the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī, that hangs in the Sasum Nagyal (Chapel of the victory over the three worlds), in the Potala.²³ This thangka shares many of the iconographic characteristics of the Freer Gallery’s thangka (see fig. 5.2).

Portraits of outstanding officials were also commissioned by the Qing rulers. One example, studied by the art collector David Kidd, is a large portrait of the important early Qing official Soni (died 1667) that bore on its outer mounting a label reading “Great Minister So . . . Imperial presentation, the twelfth year of Shun-chih.”²⁴ The Qing court honored meritorious officials and warriors in several ways. Promotions in rank for living persons might be accompanied by special gifts of silver, bestowals of rank on their deceased parents, and the offering of imperial brides to their sons. When individuals who enjoyed imperial favor died, the emperor often bestowed a posthumous name and on occasion sent his own sons to pay respects at the coffin. In a practice that began before 1644, the most outstanding officials had the privilege of being incorporated into the sacrifices conducted at the Temple of the Ancestors, where two side halls contained the spirit tablets of imperial princes and meritorious officials such as Tsereng, Daišan, Dorgon, Dodo, and Hooge.²⁵

Beginning in 1652, when the Shunzhi emperor ordered that a shrine be erected in Peking to offer sacrifice to the spirit of a major conquest general, Kong Youde (died 1652), emperors honored outstanding service to the throne by creating special shrines.²⁶ The shrine dedicated to Kong (Wuzhuang Wang ci) became the prototype for many others. Lirongbao, whose portrait is in the Sackler’s collection, was the recipient of such a shrine in 1749, dedicated to Lirongbao’s father Mishan (1632–1675), Lirongbao, and their wives (see figs. 6.7, 6.8).²⁷

In addition to the Zhaozhong ci (Shrine to loyal officials), created in 1724 by the Yongzheng emperor to “soothe” the spirits of men who had died while serving the dynasty with seasonal sacrifices, there was the Xianliang ci (Shrine to virtuous officials), erected in 1730 after the death of Yinxiang, the first Prince Yi (see figs. 2.15, 4.5). Yinxiang’s spirit tablet occupied the central place in a shrine that eventually housed the spirit tablets of more than a hundred individuals, including the Khalkha Mongol son-in-law of the Kangxi emperor, Tsereng, whose portrait is in the Sackler’s collection (see appendix 1 fig. 8).

Worship at an imperial shrine was focused on spirit tablets (see chapter 1) and was supervised by the Department of Sacrificial Worship (Taichangsi) under the Board of Rites. When an individual was commemorated at an imperial shrine, a biography to record his achievements was compiled so that future generations could learn from his example. In the official record, imperially commissioned portraits are noted for only two out of several hundred individuals cited for inclusion in these imperial shrines.²⁸

Perhaps the most visible site for the display of imperially commissioned portraits of Qing military officers and officials was the Ziguangge, a hall built during the Shunzhi reign on the west bank of Central Lake within the imperial city. The first impetus came from the Qianlong emperor, who wished to commemorate the conquest of Eastern Turkestan. After the Qing victories over the Zunghars in 1759, the victorious commander, Zhaohui, entered the capital with Muslim captives and the head of Khozi Khan. The emperor personally greeted the returning troops outside the capital, where he held a thanksgiving ceremony and troop review. The following month the Qianlong emperor held a banquet in honor of the soldiers at the Ziguangge.

The Ziguangge was transformed into a monument to the Turkestan campaigns. Two hundred poems composed by the emperor about the campaign were carved on stone stelae standing behind this pavilion. In addition, the emperor selected one hundred civil officials and military officers who had distinguished themselves in the Zunghar campaigns for special recognition. The first fifty were to be painted with inscriptions of eulogies composed by the emperor himself. The second fifty paintings were inscribed with eulogies composed by three high officials. The portrait of Imperial Guard Uksiltu (see fig. 2.12) belongs to the second group and has a bilingual inscription dated 1760 and signed by Liu Tongxun (1700–1773), Liu Lun (1711–1773), and Yu Minzhong (1714–1780). In reality, several sets of portraits were created: hanging scrolls for display in the Ziguangge, handscrolls for the emperor’s personal enjoyment, and a third set, the whereabouts of which are unknown. Additional portraits of battle heroes in the Jinchuan and later campaigns joined this first collection, which numbered approximately 280 portraits commissioned during the Qianlong reign.²⁹ Another forty-four portraits of officers winning recognition for their battle prowess in Eastern Turkestan during the Daoguang reign were also displayed in the Ziguangge, and official records suggest that others were added in later periods.³⁰ •

6

The Identity of the Sitters

the focus of this chapter is on different types of portraits and issues of identity that arise from them. The first section investigates why many paintings lack inscriptions and presents the cultural context for portraits inscribed with eulogies and other writing. The second half of the chapter is a narrative account of the interrelationships of the various personalities depicted in the Sackler's portraits, most of whom were members of the Qing imperial court.

Portraits with Inscriptions

Texts written on portraits can provide valuable information on the identity of the persons in the paintings and the circumstances under which the portraits were created. Some portraits bear inscriptions by the person depicted in the painting. One such inscription, in *Portrait of Yinghe* (fig. 6.1) in the Sackler's collection, reads as follows:

At the *chen* hour [7 to 9 a.m.] on the fourteenth day of the fourth lunar month in the *xinmao* year, thirty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign [May 27, 1771], I was born in the governor's residence of Eastern Yue [Guangdong Province]. In the *bingyin* year of the Jiaqing reign [1806], my thirty-sixth year, I commissioned a professional artist to paint my portrait in Anyuan [Peaceful garden].¹

Yinghe has impressed two seals at the end of his inscription, one bearing his name and the other a studio name. A definite identification can be made on the basis of the biographical information.

Other inscriptions may allude to the sitter's inner thoughts and praise the skill of the artist. The Sackler's informal portrait of Yinli, Prince Guo (see fig. 2.13), bears the following poem in the *shitang* (literally, poetry hall; a blank space for an inscription):

Humbled that through my kinship to the throne,
I was allotted a scepter in the prime of life,
I shall hold fast to the Way of antiquity,
And hope to preserve it without transgression.
Availing himself of this fine white silk,
That my figure may be transmitted on it,
The painter was indeed a marvelous hand,
Who erred in neither ugliness or beauty,
What is stored within is displayed without,
He has captured here my character as well.
Refraining from any wanton extravagance,
I shall follow in the footsteps of the former sages,
And by the bright window, at my clean desk,
Thrice replace the worn-out bindings on my books.²

Yinli has ended his inscription with the date May 21, 1731, and a seal with his title in Manchu and Chinese. The seal and date provide a firm identification of the sitter, which is corroborated by comparison with other portraits of Yinti.

Inscriptions are frequently elegiac. The poem on the *shitang* above the portrait of Yinti, Prince Xun (see fig. 2.14), is of this nature (see appendix 2) and so is the four-character encomium in the gold-flecked paper mounted above the portrait of Chunying, Prince Rui (fig. 6.2), written by noted calligrapher Yongxing, Prince Cheng (1752–1823). This superscription, which reads “Eminent Paragon of Loyalty and Beneficence,” is dated spring 1796, when Prince Cheng presented it to Chunying.³ Below are colophons by Tiebao (1752–1824) and Liu Yong (1720–1805), written on the right and left sides of the mounting, respectively (see appendix 2 for translations). As in the previous instances, the inscriptions permit a firm identification of the person in the portrait.

Portraits with inscriptions composed by high officials, famous scholars, or the emperor became prized heirlooms in households that counted officials among their ancestors. A poem by the Qianlong emperor, presented to his kinsman Guanglu, Prince Yu, on his eightieth birthday, was transcribed in the *shitang* above Guanglu's portrait (fig. 6.3) to commemorate this honor and ensure that it not be forgotten (see appendix 2). Because of their prestige, imperial patents and texts frequently are found on portraits. An example, the long text above the portrait of Lady Guan, wife of Shi Wenying, includes two imperial patents of promotion, one from 1697 and the second from 1716 (see fig. 2.1 and appendix 2 for translations).

Texts conferring official honors such as the one written on the *shitang* above the portrait of Yang Hong (see fig. 3.13) often followed the format of the Chinese biography. The inscription, written in 1451 by Yu Qian, a noted Ming official, praises Yang's military prowess and compares it favorably to those of other heroes. Below this is a quatrain by Xu Yongzhong, dated 1558, that concludes, “Ever since the armies of Wuxiang [Yang's

6.1

Portrait of Yinghe (1771–1839)

Qing dynasty, 1806

Inscription with two of Yinghe's seals:

for translation see chapter 6

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 230.1 x 97.4 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program

and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.80

The inscription is dated 1806 and reveals that the sitter hired a professional painter (*huagong*) for this image, which may have been created on the occasion of his thirty-sixth birthday. Yinghe chose to be depicted in formal court attire as he might if he were thinking of commissioning a formal memorial image, but he made sure that the painter alluded to another dimension of his personality by showing him as a scholar with several boxes of books behind him. The table behind Yinghe appears to be made of expensive *zitan* rosewood. A peach-shaped water coupe with a spoon and a brushpot of carved stone, on his right, testify to his readiness to write, although no brush is visible. This portrait exemplifies a Qing cultural ideal of combining a court position with scholarly erudition and is a prime example of the secularization of the ancestor portrait—without the inscription it would be difficult to know whether or not the portrait had been created explicitly for ancestor veneration.

posthumous name] once attacked, until today his iron pillar stands lofty and majestic," alluding to Yang Hong's successes against the Mongols.⁴

Portraits inscribed with imperial patents, eulogies, and commemorative poems not only honored the ancestor but also testified to the glorious traditions and high status of the family. Such portraits could be hung on special occasions and displayed to close friends. Perhaps such portraits could be used by descendants as ritual objects at the New Year and on other occasions.

Portraits with Labels

Many portraits that lack superscriptions or lengthy inscriptions of the kind cited above still identify their sitters in "labels," which give the name and title of the subject. The writing on two oil paintings of a husband and wife in the Sackler's collection (see figs. 7.4, 7.5) state that the sitters are the deceased father, Ruifeng, and deceased mother, Mujia, of a "filial son" named Qinglin. These "labels" were written on red paper mounted in the *shitang*. In the portrait of Huixian *huangguifei*, a first-rank consort of the Qianlong emperor, held by the Palace Museum, Beijing, the consort's name and title, written in small, fairly inconspicuous Chinese characters, appear on the painting's mounting to the right of the portrait.⁵ Such labels were frequently written on the slips of paper pasted on the outer edge of the rolled-up scrolls. For example, labels, or title slips (*guazhou tiqian*), identifying the portraits of the first, sixth, and seventh Princes Yi were all attached on the outside of the rolled-up scrolls, a common practice (see figs. 4.5–4.7). In other examples, as in the portraits of Hongming and his wife, Lady Wanyan, labels are found on both the outer and inner mountings (see figs. 2, 3).

When the basis for an identification of the subject of a portrait is a title slip, inconsistencies in the painting itself may arouse questions concerning the label's accuracy. Some of the issues linked with the three portraits of the Princes Yi are discussed at length in chapter 4. Might the labels for the sixth- and seventh-generation Princes Yi (figs. 4.6, 4.7) have been confused? Arguing against this hypothesis is the order in which the portraits were commissioned. We know by the different mounting silks and pigments used for the painting of the cadaverous-looking seventh Prince Yi (fig. 4.7) that it was the last one painted. One would then have to explain why Zaiyuan, the sixth-generation prince, would have been painted after his successor. This question cannot yet be answered.

Names are often found written near the painted figures in the multigenerational ancestor portraits that many families in China possessed, at least during the Qing dynasty and early twentieth century. People in some villages in north China, a region where few lineages owned corporate property or ancestor halls, used scrolls listing ancestors by generation for ritual worship. People in other villages used multigenerational ancestor paintings for the same purpose. Both types of ancestor scrolls served as a kind of genealogy, depicting the apical, or first, ancestor and his wife, and their descendants (and wives) by generation and birth order. Such paintings would be the focus of the food offerings and kowtows of all descendants at the New Year and other special occasions.⁶

Portrait of Chunying, Prince Rui
(1761–1800)

Superscription and two inscriptions
in Chinese: see appendix 2 for
translations

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian
Collections Acquisition Program and
partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff,
\$1991.83

The three-quarter-length pose signals that this image is an informal or semiformal portrait, and from the surrounding inscriptions by contemporaries it is clear that it was commissioned in the sitter's lifetime to share with friends and colleagues. The yellow jacket (*magua*), which could not have been worn without imperial permission, alludes to imperial favor; and the sitter displays a three-eyed peacock feather ornament that also attests to high honor. The artist employed a Western-influenced style for the face, making considerable use of highlights to sculpt the nose and cheeks. The Qing viewer of this scroll would have put as much emphasis on the inscriptions as the portrait image, partly because the writing was brushed by three of the most prominent calligraphers of the Jiaqing reign (1796–1820). The prince holds a Buddhist rosary, perhaps alluding to a spiritual dimension of his life.

Portraits without Inscriptions

The ancestor portraits of Qing imperial kinsmen most frequently do not bear inscriptions identifying either the subject or the painter. Moreover, a memorial in the Number One Historical Archive reported in 1750 that many of the portraits housed in the Shouhuangdian, the hall in which Qing ancestor portraits were hung, lacked *guazhou tiqian*, title slips on the outer mounting of the rolled-up scrolls.⁷ Why this might be normative will be explored below.

The absence of an inscription on a portrait does not necessarily mean that the identity of the individual depicted was unknown. All of the Confucian writings on ancestor rituals state that to be efficacious the portrait must be specific and individualized (see chapter 1). Two examples of these statements can be cited from contemporary observations. On the level of commoners, historian of the Song period Peter Bol found when he visited descendants of two Ming notables that their family not only had recently revised its genealogy but also still possessed ancestor portraits dating back to the Ming period. Ancestor portraits seem to have held a special cachet; because only descendants were supposed to own them, possession could give one a claim to descent from a famous person. The anthropologist James L. Watson has discovered that competing claims to descent from Wen Tianxiang, the Song patriot, rested in significant part on ownership of his ancestor portrait, but there was the problem that the individuals portrayed in rival portraits were not alike.⁸

Resemblances confirm some of the identifications found on the title slips on the mountings of the Sackler's portraits. Comparison of the two paintings of Yinti (see figs. 2.3, 2.14) reveals a recognizable likeness despite the fact that the informal portrait shows Yinti at a younger age. Two portraits of Yinxiang, Prince Yi (see figs. 2.15, 4.5), which show him at different ages, are more ambiguous in what they divulge, although it seems likely that the same person has been depicted, but with considerably less attention to exacting realism in the case of figure 4.5 (reasons for this are discussed in chapter 4). Arguments about resemblance can also be made for the two portraits of Daišan, Prince Li (fig. 6.4 and see appendix 1 fig. 13), although it is not impossible that the two paintings might represent father and son instead of Daišan at two stages in life. The Sackler's portraits of the mother of the Shunzhi emperor (see appendix 1 fig. 45) and of Hongtaiji (see fig. 5.1) resemble the paintings of these same people held by the Palace Museum, Beijing.⁹ Although a firm identification requires further research, imperial portraits of the Qianlong emperor also in the Palace Museum and the portrait in the Freer Gallery of Art (see fig. 5.2) suggests that the unknown rider in the Sackler's portrait is likely to be the Qianlong emperor himself (see fig. 5.5).¹⁰

Names and Identities

If there is no inscription, how can one identify the subject of a portrait? As already noted, lack of an inscription on the face of a portrait does not necessarily mean ignorance of the identity of the individual depicted. Knowledge of Chinese customs relating to names can help explain why identity was not a straightforward or simple matter.

6.3

Portrait of Guanglu, Prince Yu (1706–1785)
Qing dynasty, ca. 1785, or later copy
Inscription: see appendix 2
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 214.5 x 115.0 cm
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Smithsonian Collections Acquisition
Program and partial gift of
Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.90

The unusually elaborate silks used to mount this portrait further embellish its already considerable sumptuousness, revealed in the especially grand throne and carpet. The majesty of the setting befits the eightieth-birthday commemoration of Guanglu, Prince Yu, which is the topic of the inscription. The text is a transcription of a poem that was written by the emperor to congratulate the prince on his birthday. This portrait might have been painted in preparation for that occasion, perhaps with the intention that it would be used later for ritual veneration. Receipt of an imperial poem would surely have been a highlight of the prince's life and would reflect well on the status of the family; therefore, it was appropriate to use this text for an ancestor portrait.

Assuming that the painting was probably executed around 1785, it demonstrates how thoroughly Chinese artists had assimilated the use of Western-style perspective. Given the success of the impression of depth in space, it is striking that the white border of the carpet was treated in the traditional fashion in which carpets were painted as if they were parallel to the wall. This hybrid system of perspective was common in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century portraits.

欽賜和碩裕親王值八十

正壽詩一首

念我同

曾有幾人老來益與老年

親春秋較長正五歲福

壽駢臻值八旬善射兄

今遜筋力習蒐子尚勉

精神兒孫拜合坐而受

佳話天家貽萬春

乾隆五十年歲次乙巳六

月廿七日值

王考八十千秋大慶是日得

受

御製詩章一軸並

命皇子及孫其捧袞玉奉觴

饌而東者皆

命王考坐受其拜洵屬曠世

殊榮今謹錄於

王考朝像之上用誌不朽云

Portrait of Daišan (1583–1648)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Title slip in English: Tai Shan

Attached tag in Chinese from a mounting studio: Prince [illegible]. One scroll pasted and repaired [illegible] ribbon

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 257.7 x 162.1 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program

and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.74

This painting is remarkable for its size and exceedingly ornate mounting; its overall length is 403 centimeters by 192 centimeters wide. A painting of such large dimensions could only have been hung in a grand temple. Daišan was a famous conquest hero whose prowess with bow and arrow is alluded to by the archer's thumb ring on his right hand. The date of the portrait is difficult to ascertain, but it seems to postdate his death by at least a hundred years. In the late eighteenth century, Daišan's tablet was installed in the Imperial Ancestor Temple, which may have provided the impetus for the commissioning of the portrait. The work may have been based on a portrait made during the early years of the Qing dynasty, as the carpet closely resembles an imperial pattern known to have been used at that time.

The yellow, dragon-embroidered chair cover draped over the sitter's delicately carved lacquer chair is an imperial textile that alludes to Daišan's special stature as a conquest hero. Dragon roundels on his robe also announce his high position and, as comparison with the tapestry roundel in figure 6.5 demonstrates, the painters were concerned with accurate descriptions of costume.

In Chinese culture as in others, “identifying” an individual meant knowing his or her name. During the Qing dynasty as in earlier periods, however, a person’s name was not so easy to know. First, men and women bore different names at different stages in their lives. A man born into an elite family would have a “milk name” as an infant; after approximately three months of life, he would be given a personal name (*ming*); upon “coming of age,” he would be given a *zi*, the name by which he might be known among his peers. A man could select a literary or studio name (*hao*), or others might bestow a *hao* on him. Individuals and those who wrote about them during their lifetimes could thus use one of a number of names. None of the names used in life, however, were applied after a person died. At that point, an individual of high status acquired another, posthumous name (*shi*, *shi hao*); this was the name inscribed on the gravestone and on the spirit tablet.¹¹

The issue of names was even more complex for the Qing imperial family. Before 1644 the rulers had Manchu names. Although Manchu names persisted throughout the dynasty, after the conquest the emperors also gradually adopted many Chinese naming customs. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, they chose the generational characters and character elements (known as *pianpang*) that would adorn the names of successive generations of their descendants. They also adopted the Chinese taboo on the use of the characters in an emperor’s personal name, so when a new emperor ascended the throne, the common character in his brothers’ personal names shared with him had to be changed. Emperors had the privilege of approving the personal names of all kinsmen, and the evidence is that they often exercised their prerogative.¹² The shared generational character became a means of demarcating the group of “close” kinsmen who had a greater claim on the emperor’s purse than others did.

The custom of removing the shared generational character from the names of siblings emphasized the extent to which the emperor stood alone and above all other men. Beyond this, the emperor’s personal name was actually taboo; the characters of his name could not be used in official records once he ascended the throne, and historians customarily refer to him by his reign name (for example, the Qianlong emperor). Officials addressing the emperor in memorials called him “great emperor” (*huangshang*), “divine khan” (in Manchu, *enduringge han*), or “divine ruler” (in Manchu, *enduringge ejen*). References to the emperor used the character “*shang*” meaning “supreme.” When he referred to himself, the emperor used a unique character, “*zhen*” (I).

When an emperor died, official records referred to him by his full official name and title, suffixed by the characters *daxing*, which might be translated as “the great transit.” The deceased person was in limbo, beginning the ritual process by which he was transformed into an ancestor. One of the important milestones in the process was the ritual conferral of his posthumous name.

The new ruler would ask his high officials to deliberate on an appropriate posthumous name for his predecessor; they would present the emperor with a list from which to choose. The scale of the ritual conferring the posthumous name would be equivalent to the first-rank state sacrifices. The posthumous name would be reported at the altars of Heaven (Tiantan), Earth (Ditan), the Temple of the Ancestors (Taimiao), and the Altar of Land and Grain (Shejitan), while the document bearing the posthumous name would be presented at the altar in front of the coffin by the new ruler. From this point on, the

6.5

Dragon roundel with *shou* (longevity)

character above dragon’s head

Qing dynasty, mid–18th century

Silk tapestry (*kesi*); silk and metallic threads;

diameter, 29.5 cm

Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson

Photograph by Charles Rumph

The badge on Daišan’s robe (see fig. 6.4) would have shimmered and reflected light much the same way as this badge woven with silk and metallic threads does.

Jade tablets recording posthumous and temple names of Fulin, the Shunzhi emperor, in Manchu and Chinese (left and right, respectively)

Dated the equivalent of April 22, 1661

Wason Collection, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Photograph courtesy Cornell University Library

Qing rulers used tablets of jade because of its high cultural value and imperishability to record the names by which deceased emperors would be known in ancestral and state rituals. The bilingual tablets needed to be carved once again whenever a new ruler added characters to the posthumous names of his predecessors, as was the custom during a large part of the dynasty. Most of the incised characters were filled in with blue powdered-lapis lazuli while the deceased emperor's posthumous and temple names were filled in with gold dust.

deceased person was called by his posthumous name. A spirit tablet of wood, but sometimes of jade, and a seal, both inscribed with the posthumous name, were placed on the mortuary altar and eventually buried with the coffin.¹³ These names, and the temple names that were conferred on deceased rulers (see Table 6.1), could be and were embellished by new rulers in the dynasty. Historical references to emperors and empresses usually combined the temple name with a simplified version of the posthumous name, so that Hongli, the Qianlong emperor, was referred to in Qing documents as Gaozong, Chun huangdi (Gaozong, Chun emperor).¹⁴

The process described above also took place after empresses and high-ranking consorts died. Funerary rituals for imperial princes also included the conferral of posthumous names. The ritual placement of jade tablets bearing these posthumous names in the grave, on the grave stele marking the interment, and on state altars in such sites as the Temple of the Ancestors and the Altar of Heaven all support the argument that the identity of the deceased person had undergone a metamorphosis, shedding the personal name used when he was alive and acquiring a new ancestral name suitable for the afterlife (fig. 6.6). Under these circumstances, what would be the "name" inscribed on an ancestor portrait? And how would a portrait inscribed with the deceased person's name in life summon the transformed ancestor to the ancestral altar for the rituals? In addition, since most sacrifices using portraits were performed alongside spirit tablets bearing the deceased person's names, the portraits were not "nameless."

Table 6.1 Names of Qing Emperors and Imperial Ancestors

personal name	reign names and dates*	temple name	posthumous names	life dates
Taksi	—	Xiezu	Xuan, Iletulehe	—
Nurgaci	Tianming, 1616–26	Taizu	Gao, Dergi	1559–1626
[Hongtaiji]**	Tianzong, 1627–35 Chongde, 1636–43***	Taizong	Wen, Genggiiyen, Su	1592–1643
Fulin	Shunzhi, 1644–61	Shizu	Zhang, Eldembure	1638–1661
Xuanye	Kangxi, 1662–1722	Shengzu	Ren, Gosin	1654–1722
Yinzheng	Yongzheng, 1723–35	Shizong	Xian, Temgetulehe	1678–1735
Hongli	Qianlong, 1736–96	Gaozong	Chun, Yongkiyangga	1711–1799
Yongyan	Jiaqing, 1796–1820	Renzong	Rui, Sunggiyen	1760–1820
Minning	Daoguang, 1821–50	Xuanzong	Cheng, Sunggiyen	1782–1850
Yizhu	Xianfeng, 1851–61	Wenzong	Xian, Iletu	1831–1861
Zaichun	Tongzhi, 1862–74	Muzong	Yi, Filingga	1856–1875
Zaitian	Guangxu, 1875–1908	Dezong	Jing, Ambalinggū	1871–1908
Puyi	Xuantong, 1908–12	—	—	1906–1967

Notes: Posthumous names appear first in Chinese, then in Manchu. The "reign names" for the period before 1636 are anachronistic.

Sources: Bo Yang, *Zhongguo di wang huanghou qin-wang gongzhu shixi lu* (The descent lines of China's emperors, empresses, princes, and princesses), vol. 1, (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chubangongsi, 1986), 246–48; Chieh-hsien Chen, "A Study of the Manchu Posthumous Titles of the Ch'ing Emperors," *Central Asiatic Journal* 26, nos. 3–4 (1982): 187–92; Jerry Norman, *A Concise Manchu-English Lexicon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 319.

* The Manchu-language reign names have been omitted from this table.

** Hongtaiji was probably a title and not a personal name. See Pamela K. Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997), 208.

*** Hongtaiji used the two reign names listed here.

Qing naming customs for women show that even the highest-ranked women lacked the basic individual identities given to all men in the form of a personal name. Like their brothers, girls received nicknames or were referred to by birth order, such as “elder sister,” “younger sister,” and so on. With an exception during the first half of the seventeenth century, even princesses, whose births were recorded in the imperial genealogy, did not have personal names. Women’s births were usually omitted in the genealogies compiled by commoner families.

The bride’s problematic identity could also be seen in marriage. As among commoners, the imperial family recorded the bride’s father’s clan name, father’s personal name, and his rank. When a woman entered the imperial harem, she received a new name and consort rank, but both changed frequently during the course of her married life. For example, when Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) entered the palace as a low-

ranking consort, she was named Lan (orchid). When she was promoted to the fourth rank in 1854, she became Yi (virtuous). After giving birth to a son in 1856 who later became the Tongzhi emperor, the future empress dowager was promoted to the third and subsequently to the second rank. Cixi, the designation by which she is generally known, was the title conferred on her when she became empress dowager, after her infant son inherited the throne.¹⁵

Anthropologist Rubie S. Watson has noted that the lack of personal names reflects the social subordination of Chinese women in a male-dominated society.¹⁶ The kinds of names to which women answered depended on their age. Before they were married, women were frequently identified in terms of their place within the sibling birth order. After marriage, they continued to bear their father's surname, indicating their status as eternal "outsiders" to the male descent group of their husbands. If they bore children, they became identified as "So-and-so's mother." The pinnacle of their life careers would be achieved when they became grandmothers and mothers-in-law. Throughout life, a woman's status depended first on her father, second on her husband, and finally on her sons.

The example of Empress Dowager Cixi affirms the applicability of these generalizations even to imperial consorts. Her consort names "Orchid" and "Virtuous" were discarded as Cixi was promoted. "Cixi," literally "Compassionate and Blessed," formed part of the empress dowager title. The Tongzhi emperor's mother was also known as the "Western Empress Dowager" (Xi Taihou), referring to her residence in the western palace. Informally within the court she was "Old Buddha" (Lao Foye) or "Venerable Ancestor" (Lao Zuzong). None of these was a personal name. After her death, Cixi became Xiaoqin Xian Huanghou ("Filial and Commanding-Respect Xian Empress"), a posthumous title, which followed the conventions that classified deceased empresses by the prefix "Filial" (Xiao) and their husbands' temple name (Xian in her case).

Princesses were significant exceptions to the generalizations concerning the low status of women in Qing society. Unlike most other women, they remained members of their natal families even after marriage. Whereas commoner women tended to marry social equals or those of slightly higher status, princesses by definition were forced to marry persons of lesser rank. Higher rank enabled them to dominate relationships with their husbands and in-laws and determine the status of their husbands and children. And, although their husbands retained their own clan identities, in social terms they became incorporated into the imperial family. But, despite all of their privilege, Qing princesses do not seem to have had personal names after the first half of the seventeenth century.¹⁷

The Sackler's collection includes a portrait of a Qing princess (see appendix 1 fig. 39) without an inscription, so her identity is not completely clear. According to a title slip on the outside mounting, the subject is the Daoguang emperor's fifth daughter, Princess Shouzang (1829–1856). It is also possible that the princess is the emperor's sixth daughter, Princess Shou'en (1831–1859). The figure is dressed in court robes with all of the requisite accessories, including the scarf (*caishui*) that dangles from the crossed necklaces; this dress would have been appropriate for either the second-rank Princess Shouzang or the first-rank Princess Shou'en.

There are many portraits of wives in the Sackler's collection and in virtually every case the only identification available is the name of the woman's husband. Examples include a portrait of a woman dressed in full court robes (see appendix 1 fig. 6) whose husband, "Ser Er Chen," cannot be identified. Checking on the husband's biography or his lineage's genealogy, one would normally only find the natal surnames of his wives and concubines. For example, a portrait labeled "Wife of Dodo" (see appendix 1 fig. 4) does not tell us which of Dodo's eleven consorts she might be. The same problem occurs with "Wife of Yinreng," since Yinreng too had eleven consorts (see appendix 1 figs. 16, 17). Archival records for the Qing imperial family show that when lists of potential brides were compiled, the background of the woman's father and sometimes the grandfather were consulted, but this kind of information would not ordinarily have appeared in printed records. Women thus are the most difficult individuals to trace in Chinese history.

Names were of course important. The Confucians who railed against the use of portraits in ancestor ritual all assumed the need for a spirit tablet as a vessel to house the spirit of the deceased. Spirit tablets, inscribed with the posthumous names of ancestors, did not house the ancestral spirits all the time. Ancestors were summoned by rituals that invoked their presence, which seem to have involved speaking their names while focusing inwardly to visualize them (see chapter 1). Since these rituals were performed at least once a year in properly conducted households, the lineage head or head of the household would be acquainted with the images of his ancestors, and this information, whether written on the outside of the scroll or not, could be handed down from generation to generation. The absence of an inscription was therefore not an impediment to the use of the portrait in ancestor rituals.

Subjects in the Sackler's Collection

In the following narrative, the individuals whose portraits are in the Sackler collection are placed in historical context with references to the appropriate figure numbers. The vast majority of the approximately fifty individuals whose portraits in the Sackler collection can be identified were Manchus and many were imperial kinsmen. Although only two, Hongtaiji (Taizong) and the Qianlong emperor, were rulers, many of the others played crucial roles during the Qing conquest. Several were married to Qing princesses. All of the rest were meritorious officials or their wives.

Aisin Gioro

The name of the imperial lineage was coined by Nurgaci (1559–1626). *Aisin* is the Manchu word for gold (*jin* in Chinese), while *gioro* denotes a Manchu clan. By naming his lineage the "gold clan," Nurgaci claimed descent from the Jurchen rulers of the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). The highest leadership positions in the Manchu banner system, that of banner lord, or *beile*, were reserved for descendants of Nurgaci and his four brothers.¹⁸

As noted in chapter 5, all persons born into the Aisin Gioro lineage were recorded in a genealogy, which was revised twenty-eight times in the course of the dynasty. Although

all Aisin Gioro men were in theory favored over the rest of the population, the group was actually subdivided into a small privileged elite and a large majority whose stipends and privileges became reduced during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The fate of different branches of the Aisin Gioro lineage was shaped by the fierce competition over leadership that punctuated the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Jurchens had traditionally chosen family and tribal heads primarily on the basis of merit rather than birth; brothers as well as sons were eligible to succeed Nurgaci, the highest leader, or khan. Asked to name a successor, Nurgaci suggested that the eight-banner *beile* should select as khan the person in their group with the greatest talent and leadership ability. In reality, an intense struggle among the four senior banner lords ensued after Nurgaci died in 1626. By 1635, Nurgaci's eighth son, Hongtaiji (see fig. 5.1), emerged as the leader, purging his strongest rivals and receiving the submission of the other banner lords.

The trend toward centralization of power in the hands of the emperor did not resolve fundamental ambiguities in Manchu attitudes toward succession. Hongtaiji's death in 1643 sparked another conflict in which his uncle Daišan (see fig. 6.4), his brothers Dorgon and Dodo (see appendix 1 figs. 2, 3, 31), and his son Hooge were nominated to become the next ruler. The eventual compromise choice was Hongtaiji's ninth son, Fulin, who reigned as the Shunzhi emperor (reigned 1644–61). By 1661, when Fulin died, fraternal succession was no longer an alternative to father-son succession, but there was still no agreement on how the choice of heir should be made. Eventually a child not yet seven years old was selected because he had survived smallpox, the disease that killed his father. He became the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722).

The system of collegial election, used by Mongols and Inner Asian peoples like the Jurchen, had the merit of selecting talented men as leaders, but it created bitter quarrels among ambitious descendants and was highly divisive. Nurgaci himself oversaw the execution of an ambitious younger brother. When his own eldest son, Cuyeng (see appendix 1 fig. 33 and the portrait of Cuyeng's wife, appendix 1 fig. 34), became too ambitious, Nurgaci arranged for him to be executed. Half of those sons of Nurgaci who survived to adulthood were either eventually executed, forced to commit suicide, or posthumously disgraced. Dorgon, who exercised the supreme power as regent during the early Shunzhi reign, was purged and stripped of his titles after his death in 1650. His brother Dodo was purged at the same time. Nine of the Kangxi emperor's sons were disgraced for their roles in the succession struggles of that reign. Oboi (see fig. 4.3), an official who turned against his patron Dorgon to achieve prominence in the Shunzhi reign, was himself purged by the young Kangxi emperor in 1669.

The Chinese principle that designated the eldest son of the empress as the crown prince from a very early age encouraged political stability but suffered from the impossibility of knowing whether the heir would possess the skills required for rulership. Under the system that had been used by the preceding Ming dynasty, brothers of the crown prince were given titles, sent to live on provincial estates, and forbidden to participate in governance.

In the late seventeenth century, the Kangxi emperor actually tried to adopt the Chinese succession rule. The failure of his experiment had something to do with the

personalities of the crown prince and his father but was perhaps also a consequence of the retention of elements of the Jurchen tradition that conflicted with the Chinese system. All Manchu princes were required to live in Peking and appointed to perform military, diplomatic, and administrative functions. The advantage of this rule for the Jurchen system of succession was that the emperor could personally scrutinize the behavior and abilities of each son to decide who would be most suitable to inherit the throne. The disadvantage was that princes could become deeply enmeshed in court politics. When relations between the emperor and his crown prince deteriorated, there were many princes who quickly tried to fill the post of heir.

The fundamental conflict between Chinese and Manchu systems of succession was at the core of the controversy surrounding the succession during the Kangxi reign. The emperor designated Yinreng (see appendix 1 fig. 17 and the portrait of his wife, appendix 1 fig. 16), the eldest son of his empress, as heir apparent when the child was, by Western reckoning, less than two years old. The Kangxi emperor came to regret his decision. He disapproved of Yinreng's behavior and eventually decided that he was unfit to rule. Moreover, Yinreng became the nucleus of a court faction that weakened the emperor's authority. When the emperor removed Yinreng from the heirship in 1712, his other sons vied to supplant him as heir. Eight princes were punished for their roles in the sibling rivalry. Despite repeated memorials from officials, the Kangxi emperor refused to name another heir, with the result that his deathbed designation of Yinzhen, his fourth son, was clouded by rumors of fraud.¹⁹

Yinzhen, the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35), introduced the policy of secret succession that would prevail for the rest of the dynasty. The new emperor wrote the name of his heir in an edict, which he placed in a casket that was to be opened only after his death. Despite repeated attempts by officials to force Qing emperors to publicly identify their heirs, only the Qianlong emperor did so—and he was the only Qing ruler to abdicate the throne.

The lives of many imperial kinsmen were directly affected by the politics of imperial succession. Hongming (1705–1767; see fig. 3) was descended from one of the eight sons of the Kangxi emperor, all of whom became victims of the succession struggle won by Yinzhen. Yinti (1688–1755), who was the Yongzheng emperor's full brother, was another prime candidate for the emperorship. At the time of the Kangxi emperor's death, Yinti (see figs. 2.3, 2.14) was the commander-in-chief of the Qing troops in the northwest and engaged in the campaign launched against the Zunghar invaders of Tibet. By the time he returned to Peking, the Yongzheng emperor was already enthroned. Yinti's disappointment and anger led him to commit indiscretions that were seized as pretexts for his imprisonment.²⁰

Nor was he the only victim. Yinzhi (see appendix 1 fig. 22), the third son, was demoted one rank in 1728 and briefly restored in 1730 before being stripped of rank and put in confinement. Yinsi (see appendix 1 fig. 10), Yintang (see appendix 1 fig. 19), and Yin'e (see appendix 1 fig. 35), respectively the eighth, ninth, and tenth sons of the Kangxi emperor, were stripped of their princedom in 1725 and 1726; Yinsi and Yintang were also expelled from the imperial lineage in 1726 and remained *persona non grata* until their names were restored in the imperial genealogy in 1778. Yinxi (see appendix 1 fig.

46), who managed to have a relatively peaceful life, was unusual in the polarized political atmosphere of the late Kangxi and Yongzheng courts.

The first generation of imperial princes earned their titles through merit, not birth. Daišan, the first Prince Li (see fig. 6.4 and appendix 1 fig. 13), was an example of the conquest hero. As one of the banner lords appointed by Nurgaci, he won renown in the campaign to conquer the Ula tribe (1607–13) and achieved major victories at Fushun (1618), Sarhū (1619), and the battle of Shenyang (1621). Playing a leading role in the Manchu campaigns against the Ming from 1629 to 1634, Daišan was prominent in the highest councils of state throughout his life. Moreover, several of his sons also distinguished themselves on the battlefield and won first- or second-rank princedoms of their own. Three of the “eight great houses” of the imperial lineage, enjoying the privilege of perpetual inheritance, were descended from Daišan and his sons.²¹

As the custom until 1645 was for banner lords to share with the ruler in the lands any wealth acquired through battle, princes of the conquest generation held vast estates, many times larger than the estates of princes who received titles after 1660. Boggodo, Prince Zhuang (see fig. 2.2), inherited one of the great conquest princedoms. His properties, scattered over northeast and north China, were so great that they represented approximately 5.5 percent of the total taxable arable land in the empire in 1887, more than 150 years after Boggodo’s death. When Boggodo died without an heir, the wealth attached to his princely title motivated the Yongzheng emperor to bestow it on Yinlu, one of the emperor’s favored brothers, an act that historians have described as an “extraordinary favor.”²²

Yinlu was one of three princes who had sided with Yinzhen in the succession struggle and was subsequently rewarded. Yinli, Prince Guo (see fig. 2.13), was another, and Yinxiang, Prince Yi (see figs. 2.15, 4.5), was the third. Yinli’s inscription on his informal portrait has an intimate tone that may reflect his good relationship with the emperor. Yinxiang’s descendants, Zaiyuan (see fig. 4.6) and Zaidun (see fig. 4.7), respectively the sixth and seventh Princes Yi, benefited from their ancestor’s fraternal bond, which resulted in the grant of perpetual inheritance to this first-rank princedom.

Under normal circumstances, for those without the privilege of perpetual inheritance, princely titles were subject to reduction in rank with each transmission. When a prince died, one son could inherit his father’s title, reduced one degree in rank until a specified level was reached. For example, Yinli’s title, Prince Guo, was bestowed on Hongyan (see fig. 5.4 and appendix 1 fig. 1) at the reduced second rank. Since the troops, estates, and goods granted to a prince had to be taken out of the emperor’s holdings, the princedoms created after 1645 were more modest in size than those of the conquest heroes.²³

It was the Qianlong emperor who further systematized and tightened imperial control over the imperial princes. The emperor used his power to designate the heir to princely titles to reinforce the martial Manchu tradition of his forebears, requiring that potential candidates appear for an interview testing their skills in the Manchu language and mounted archery. The many imperial kinsmen without titles could obtain employment through attending imperial clan academies, established in the banners, and through passing special examinations. Service in the imperial guard was also a

popular career path for imperial kinsmen. As the biographies of Guanglu (see fig. 6.3), Yinghe (see fig. 6.1), and Zaiyuan demonstrate, however, government service could bring punishments as well as rewards.

The Qianlong emperor also restored some of the important princedoms that had been abolished through the succession struggles of earlier epochs. In 1778 the emperor noted:

In my spare time I peruse the veritable records of my ancestors. . . . I know the difficulties of establishing the dynasty, of how the kinsmen of that time exerted themselves to the utmost to settle the central plain. . . . Truly from ancient times there has never been anything like it.²⁴

The problem, however, was that purges had removed some of the most meritorious imperial kinsmen from the historical record. How could the Aisin Gioro of the emperor's generation emulate the conquest heroes when kinsmen like Dorgon, who contributed so greatly to the Manchu victory, were unjustly excised from the genealogical record? Moreover, Dorgon's brothers, who had also won fame on the battlefield, had been wrongly punished because of their relationship to Dorgon. The titles of the Aisin Gioro had been so altered that the continuity between the founders and their descendants was broken: "As the descendants become more distant from the ancestors, they almost forget the sources of their ancestors' investitures."²⁵

In 1778, Dorgon's title, Prince Rui, was revived and granted to Chunying (see fig. 6.2), a descendant of Dorgon's brother Dodo. Dorgon's was one of a number of reinstatements of Nurgaci's and Hongtaiji's sons. The Qianlong emperor granted the descendants of eight Aisin Gioro princedoms the privilege of perpetual inheritance to ensure that the achievements of the conquest heroes would never be forgotten. Collectively this select group was called the "iron-capped princes" (*tiemaozi wang*).²⁶

Aisin Gioro Affines

The Sackler's collection of portraits includes those of Lady Wanyan (see fig. 2) and Yinti's wife (with her husband, see fig. 2.3), as well as two portraits traditionally alleged to be (but probably are not) Lady Liu (see figs. 6, 4.2), all of whom were linked to the imperial lineage as wives and mothers. Lirongbao (fig. 6.8) and his wife (fig. 6.7) received special honors, and perhaps these portraits were painted after their daughter married the Qianlong emperor and became his first empress. Jalafengge (see fig. 5.11), an imperial son-in-law, was a member of a prominent Manchu clan that exchanged many brides with the imperial family. We know his identity, but not that of the "Son-in-Law of the Daoguang Emperor" (see appendix 1 fig. 44), who is wearing court robes and a dragon badge on his surcoat. This person could be one of five individuals.

Tsereng (see appendix 1 fig. 8), a Khalkha Mongol, was introduced into the Qing court when his tribe's leader surrendered to the Manchus in the 1680s. Tsereng studied in the palace school alongside the Manchu princes from 1692. In 1706 he married the tenth daughter of the Kangxi emperor. After she died (1710), Tsereng moved to pasturelands in Mongolia with his men, and there he successfully led Qing troops in battles

Portrait of Lirongbao's Wife

(fl. 17th century)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Title slip in Chinese: Official portrait of
mother Wuzu, posthumously enfeoffed

Duchess of the First Rank

Title slip in English: Chien Lung's
mother-in-law

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 177.6 x 98.6 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,

Smithsonian Institution, Washington,

D.C.; Smithsonian Collections

Acquisition Program and partial gift of

Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.129

Despite the lavishness of the wearer's costume, it is not formal court attire, which was the usual preference for ancestor portraits. The elaborate surcoat, however, with its long, coiling dragons, resembles some garments known to have been worn by the empress. It can be imagined that this portrait was made after the wearer's daughter became an empress, so the selection of clothing reflects her status within the palace circle. The opulent robe seems discordant with the relatively plain hat, and the sitter is not wearing any court jewelry. These discrepancies are unsolved, though examination of a large number of portraits reveals far more anomalies in costume than might be expected, especially since Chinese clothing was tightly regulated to correspond with rank. Revelations about the painstaking care taken to paint this image were discovered during conservation of the scroll and are discussed in chapter 4.

6.8

Portrait of Lirongbao

(fl. late 17th century)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Title slip in Chinese: Official portrait of Wuzu, posthumously enfeoffed Duke Cheng'en and Grand Master for Splendid Happiness

Title slip in English: Ch'ien-Lung's Father-in-Law

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 177.6 x 98.6 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;

Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.130

This portrait of the Qianlong emperor's father-in-law appears to have been painted posthumously, since Lirongbao was not given the Chinese rank recorded on the painting's title slip until his daughter's installation as empress in 1737. The painting belongs to a pair with an image of his wife (see fig. 6.7). He wears the crane badge of a first-rank official on his surcoat, and five-clawed dragons adorn the skirt of his *chaofu* (first-rank court dress). Both of these symbols of high rank accord with his posthumous elevation. The carpet, as in many of the Sackler's portraits, represents a style popular at the palace earlier than the date of the portrait but contemporary with the period in which he lived.

One of the few exceptions to matching chair covers in paired portraits occurs when the man is shown with a tiger pelt and the woman a silk brocade. Although women can be depicted seated on animal skins, that type of chair covering is more frequently associated with men.

6.9

Li Yinzu (1629–1664)

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century

Title slip in Chinese: Posthumous portrait of Shengwu, Li Yinzu, Grand Master for Splendid Happiness, Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent, Governor-General of Huguang, and Minister of the Board of War
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;
image only, 182.7 x 100.1 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.104

One of two paintings of the conquest-era bannerman Li Yinzu in the Sackler's collection (see appendix 1 fig. 23), this portrait depicts him with careful accuracy, including dark, pockmarked skin. Nonetheless the picture seems to date from after his death. The figure is rather cramped, suggesting that the painting may have once been larger but was trimmed. Tiger-skin chair throws are often included in paintings of men of honor, and here the custom of lining animal pelts with silk brocade can be observed.

This portrait was probably created as a standard memorial image, but the asymmetrical position of the feet and diagonal sweep of the scarf hanging from his belt create a greater sense of motion than is typically seen in ancestor portraits. The manner in which Li holds his court necklace is also unusual.

against the Western Mongols (1721). His success in subsequent campaigns (1731) won him a first-degree princedom, an award of ten thousand Chinese ounces of silver, and a special designation (Chaoyong) recognizing his prowess on the battlefield at Erdeni Zuu. Tsereng was also active on the diplomatic front. He helped organize his kinsmen into the Sain Noyon khanate, one of the major subdivisions of the Khalkha tribes, and he represented the Qing court at the negotiations with Russia culminating in the Treaty of Kiakhta (1727). Tsereng, the military governor of Uliasutai and captain general of the Sain Noyon khanate, was one of only two Mongols whose spirit tablets were installed in a side hall of the Temple of the Ancestors, after his death in 1750. His outstanding contributions to Qing rule were recognized in the favor shown his descendants, several of whom were given imperial brides.²⁷

Officials

Several officials whose portraits are in the Sackler's collection played prominent roles in the Manchu conquest of the Ming empire. Each represents a different group of allies. Li Yinzu (fig. 6.9 and appendix 1 fig. 23) came from a Korean family that had served the Ming dynasty in the northeast. His father, captured in battle, switched his allegiance at a crucial time when Nurgaci's campaign successes provided great opportunities for upward advancement. Shang Kexi (see fig. 5.9) was another Ming adherent who was rewarded with high titles after switching sides in 1633. Oboi (see fig. 4.3) rose to be regent, only to be disgraced by the young Kangxi emperor. Shi Wenying (see appendix 1 fig. 38), who was the husband of Lady Guan (see fig. 2.1), both of whose portraits are in the Sackler's collection, and Yu Chenglong (see fig. 4.13) were high officials during the Kangxi reign. Yinghe (see fig. 6.1), whose portrait depicts him in formal court robes, belonged to a Manchu clan with a notable record of official service.

The portrait of Yang Hong (see fig. 3.13) differs from the rest in its iconography (see chapter 3); in the life dates of its subject, a Ming commander of the fifteenth century; and in the importance accorded the author of the superscription, Yang Hong's patron Yu Qian. •

7

Innovation within Tradition

the phrase that best characterizes Chinese painting from the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) well into the twentieth century is “innovation within tradition.” Most commonly invoked to describe trends in landscape painting, it also applies to formal commemorative and ritual portraits. Memorial portraiture was transformed less dramatically than other genres of portraiture, and many ancestor portraits of late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century date are conservative in style. Nonetheless, some exhibit significant changes as a result of the introduction of the camera. Over time, photography gradually has come to supersede painted portraits in popularity, though it has not totally eclipsed them.

In yet another modern development, the growth in the number of foreign visitors to China created an international market for traditional Chinese ancestor portraits. Once Westerners began to collect these sumptuous portraits, suppliers in China filled the demand any way they could. When the stock of genuine portraits for sale was low, some dealers commissioned ersatz portraits or instructed artisans to alter genuine ones to meet particular customer requests. This chapter explores the trends in the last stages in the stylistic evolution of Chinese ancestor portraits and brings attention to bogus examples that have too often gone undetected alongside genuine works.

The Advent of the Camera

Photography was introduced into China with the British at the time of the Opium War (1840–42). The new technology was quickly accepted in China and adopted almost immediately by Qing officials who came in contact with foreigners, as demonstrated by a daguerreotype of Qiying, the imperial commissioner delegated to negotiate with the British. The photograph was taken in 1844 by Jules Itier, a Frenchman who entered the Qing Maritime Customs Service.¹ Itier, who arrived in China in October 1844, seems to have been the first person to bring in photographic equipment. Others followed, but before the Treaty of Tianjin (1860), a ban on travel in the interior of the country confined them to the coastal treaty ports opened by the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). When the allied expeditionary forces marched to the Qing capital in 1860, the French and British troops were accompanied by Antoine Fauchery and Felix Beato, who produced extensive photographs of the battlefields and landscapes of north China in the course of a year's stay. During the 1860s, John Thomson recorded scenes of daily life in various interior regions of the empire. These pioneers produced images of the Qing empire that circulated in Europe and stimulated the development of photography in China.

The Chinese were immensely impressed with the images produced by cameras. A Hunan scholar, Zhou Shouchang, wrote that the new "portrait method" was one of the most marvelous innovations he had seen during his travels in Guangdong Province in 1846. The photographic image was "more true" than the painted portrait and cheaper and quicker to produce. Photographic technology changed greatly in the decades after 1840. In the 1860s the daguerreotype, which produced only a single copy, was supplanted by wet collodion and in the 1870s by silver gelatin glass-plate negatives that could produce multiple copies. By the time the Qing dynasty fell in 1911, George Eastman had already created the portable camera, and color photography was beginning to become more widely available.²

Several professional portrait painters were among the first Chinese to open photography studios, after serving as apprentices and learning the technology from European amateur photographers. By virtue of its prominence in foreign trade, Hong Kong was the first city where commercial photography flourished. An advertisement for photographic studios appeared in 1846 in the *China Mail*, published in Hong Kong. The first Chinese-owned establishment may have been Lai Afong's on Queen's Road in 1859, which specialized in portraits of European visitors. Newspaper ads of the 1870s show that several Chinese photography studios were open for business in Shanghai. Some of these firms had been started by Cantonese who had moved their businesses from Hong Kong.

Photography before the 1890s was technologically more complex than it became later. In the 1870s a number of books explaining the technology of the camera were published in Chinese. In 1873, John Hepburn, who taught at the foreign-language school (Tongwenguan), published the first work in Chinese exclusively devoted to photography, *Tuoying qiguan* (Wonderful sights of cast-off shadows), and other publications followed. From that point on, Chinese readers could learn the technology behind the photograph from books.

The spread of photography studios to the north seems to have been delayed by a decade or more. By the 1870s several studios were open for business in Tianjin. One of them, owned by a Chinese, Liang Shitai, attracted the notice of Yihuan, Prince Chun, who visited Tianjin in 1885 and had himself photographed. Prince Chun presented the court with copies of the photographs Liang took. That he was impressed with the new innovation is evident in his suggestion, later that year, that the court compare paintings of meritorious officials with photographs to verify their accuracy.³

The first photography studio in Peking, called Fengtai, opened in 1892. Its proprietor, Ren Jingfeng, had earlier left a hereditary government post to enter the pharmaceutical business. Ren then became interested in photography during a business trip to Japan. He opened Fengtai upon his return and prospered as Chinese came to sit for portraits. Other studios opened, many of them in the Liulichang neighborhood of the Outer City.

Like others, Manchu officials were captivated by photography. Yixin, Prince Gong, asked John Thomson to photograph him, and the Guangxu emperor (reigned 1875–1908) once had a photograph taken of himself and his consort, Zhen fei.⁴ As a photograph in the archives of the Freer and Sackler galleries of the Xuantong emperor (reigned 1908–12) and his consort shows, the imperial court shared in the desire to have images of themselves made in the new medium (fig. 7.1). Their poses reveal a studied casualness. There was no “candor” in imperial portraits, whether in the medium of painting or photography.

In 1903, Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) appointed a court photographer named Yunling, who had learned photography while in France during his father’s ambassadorial service there. The evidence of Yunling’s labors as court photographer from 1903 to 1905 exist in the Palace Museum in Beijing and in foreign collections, since the empress dowager bestowed copies of the photographs on diplomats. By 1906, in a marked departure from the tradition of keeping imperial portraits out of public circulation, the court permitted photographs of the empress dowager and emperor to be disseminated in a pictorial collection titled “Two hundred photographs of famous persons here and abroad” (*Zhongwai erbai mingren zhaoxiang quance*). This step reveals the change in political climate that had been taking place as Qing rulers and their advisers observed and read about the ways in which Japan and Europe were mobilizing the loyalties of their populations to serve new national goals. The ruler’s portrait was now recast as a tool for transforming subjects into the citizens of a modern nation. With that step, the Chinese portrait entered a new political phase that would ultimately put the likenesses of Chiang Kai-shek (1888–1975) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976) on the walls of every government office, school, and household.

Photographic Ancestor Portraits and Influences on Painting

Technical difficulties associated with the early photographic process, including lengthy exposure times, problematic lighting, and inaccurate tonal values, initially rendered photography clumsy for creative expression. As a young medium, it could not compete with the self-consciously witty and satirical portraits and self-portraits by late-Qing

7.1

The Xuantong emperor (r. 1908–12)
and his consort

Early 20th century

Photograph; modern print from
a copy negative

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler
Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.; SC-GR 269

7.2

Portrait of an Official from Taiwan

Qing dynasty–Republic period,
late 19th–early 20 century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;
image only, 141.5 x approx. 83.0 cm

Private collection, Taiwan

Photograph after *Ming Qing guanxianghua*
tulu (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan yishu jiaoyu
guan, 1998), 128

This scroll was purchased in Taiwan, and some scholars believe the unidentified sitter is a Taiwanese official because the “cloud-spotted” panther skin on the chair is from an animal said to be indigenous to Taiwan. The chair seems to be an imaginary form that is a composite of features taken from several distinct styles of furniture. Although the painting was rendered with a colored palette, the face was executed in tones of gray, black, and white, which seems to have been inspired by a desire to imbue the image with a photographic effect.

dynasty artists, but the static and contrived poses that sitters assumed in photographs found a corollary in ancestor portraits. The two formats immediately began to compete for clientele, initiating a tendency toward mutual borrowing and imitation. As a German traveler in Peking in 1899 observed, portraits of deceased relatives were “particularly respected,” but “recently, photography has become competitive with portrait painting in large cities that are increasingly influenced by Europe.”⁵

Photography came to be used to document the faces of people near the end of their lives, and for at least a short while photographs were also taken of the recently deceased. This practice was comparable to sending a painter to view a corpse before he creates a portrait and may have been influenced by the photographic method. Marciano Baptista, a painter and photographer active in Hong Kong from the 1860s through the 1880s, was said by his family to have a “photographic specialty and favorite subject,” consisting of “post-mortem portraiture of Chinese notables at their own funerals.”⁶

Painting traditions clearly influenced early portrait photography. John Thomson recorded that many of his Chinese clients requested to be photographed full-length and frontally.⁷ As mentioned above, photographs commissioned by the elite were often given to others, but many of the frontal portraits commissioned from Thomson and the growing number of photography shops must have been intended for memorial veneration. Already by the early twentieth century, it had become common to use photographs in funeral processions and to display them over family altars. Families welcomed the advantage of being able to make multiple images from one photographic negative, and they frequently distributed copies of a portrait to every son (and often every daughter). In the early twentieth century, these photographs were often touched up and colored by hand.

The scholar Régine Thiriez has pointed out that despite the Chinese customer’s request for a frontal pose in a photograph, a large number of nineteenth-century photographs are turned in a three-quarter view or record the sitter from a slight angle.⁸ Thiriez offers an explanation. The camera can conceal too much in a full frontal view. A strictly frontal pose renders invisible a subject’s honorary peacock feather worn pinned to the back of his cap. A painter can easily manipulate the situation and paint the feather to the side without needing to change the placement of the sitter’s head, but a photographer cannot.⁹ This sleight of hand explains why peacock feathers in Chinese portraits appear to be randomly worn on either the sitter’s left or right—the direction was arbitrary because in reality the feather was always worn at the back of the head. People were willing to abandon full frontality and turn their heads in the case of photographs to emphasize the status symbols they wore.

Another impetus for an angled pose was the fact that it was the norm in Western portrait photography and in studios with photographers trained by foreigners. Western photographs were widely available in major Chinese urban centers, and the foreign models had an exotic cachet that helped spark interest in China in a new style.

In a short time, painted ancestor portraits also occasionally began to adopt the new pose. A late-nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century portrait of an official in late-Qing dress (fig. 7.2) is painted in the standard manner of a traditional ancestor portrait.

From the chest down, his body is rigidly frontal, but his head is turned in a three-quarter view and his shoulders are slightly off axis. After the introduction of the camera, memorial poses became more varied—full or partial frontality were both accepted for the face. The rendering of the facial features in graded tonalities of black and white reproduces the effect of black-and-white photographs of the same era.

On many fronts, the new popularity of photographs affected ancestor portrait paintings. Photographs record a linear perspective and the play of light and shadow across a subject, and these effects, which also recall stylistic features of Western painting, were assimilated into Chinese memorial portrait paintings rapidly after photography gained status.

As mentioned earlier, bust-length painted portraits in China served several different functions, including display in funeral ceremonies. The bust-length was, however, an extremely popular choice in photography, and as photography came to be widely accepted as a substitute for painted ancestor portraits, the bust-length pose also came to be used for formal images intended for presentation on the altar. Bust-length photographs and painted full-length portraits of the ancestors were often displayed together (fig. 7.3). The pervasive use of bust-length photographs as ritual images ultimately affected the painted medium. Some painted portraits over altars borrowed the custom of a “close up,” bust-length image. But in this regard more than others, painting changed slowly, with most customers still preferring the full-length view of the sitter.

One of the more unexpected results of photography was the opening of the door to wider facial expressions in ancestor portraits. When photography was still new, the long exposure times sometimes resulted in a sitter’s relaxing his or her facial muscles so that the mouth was caught by the camera with a slight smile or frown. A few late-Qing ancestor portraits also reflect this softening of the mouth, which was replacing the normative, tautly drawn lips of earlier portraits. *Portrait of Father Ruifeng* and *Portrait of Mother Mujia* (figs. 7.4, 7.5) in the Sackler’s collection reflect this and many other features introduced by the camera.

The two scrolls depict ordinary citizens who have received honorary titles. Mujia’s round badge is a special insignia worn by those whose husbands purchased their rank (see fig. 7.6). Each scroll bears a title slip with the respective subject’s birth and death dates given according to the Chinese cyclical calendar.

Based on style, the paintings can be dated no earlier than the 1870s, and therefore the cyclical date of Ruifeng’s death could correspond to either 1875 or 1935, and his wife’s death date could correspond to either 1890 or 1950. Since Richard Pritzlaff received his last portraits in 1948, Mujia’s image must date to around 1890, which seems the most likely date for both paintings. They were probably considered almost avant-garde in terms of style and technique when they were created. Even the unusual choice of oil pigments for these portraits may reflect the influence of photography. The appearance of the smooth, thin film of oil on the surface of silk resembles the printing process of early photographs.

The face in *Portrait of Mother Mujia*, like that of her husband’s, is empirically realistic. Every wrinkle has been documented as closely as if a camera had been trained on them. Emphatic use of light and shadow models every contour of her face, creating a

7.3

Altar in Liancheng County, southwestern Fujian Province, at the Chinese New Year Photograph, early 1990s

Photograph courtesy John Lagerway

Fujianese villagers installed ancestor images over their domestic altars for a period that usually lasted from the first to the sixteenth day of the first lunar month. Afterward, the paintings were rolled up and stored underneath the giant altar tables or near the altar. The calligraphy over this altar reads, “Hall to perpetuate the memories of the deceased.”

Portrait of Mother Mujia

Qing dynasty, ca. 1890

Inscription in Chinese: Portrait of my deceased mother Mujia, dame-consort of the First Rank. [signed] Reverently painted by her filial son Qinglin, bathed in scent

Title slip in Chinese: Born on the tenth day in twelfth lunar month of the [wu-]chen year [January 25, 1809]; died on the sixth day at the beginning of the second lunar month in the gengyin year [February 24, 1890]

Hanging scroll; oil pigments on silk;

image only, 123.4 x 67.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 51991.137

The inscription proclaims Mujia to be a dame-consort of the first rank, which in this case is an honorary title. In contrast to the square rank badges worn by officials and their spouses, Mujia's insignia is round, which indicates that her husband was not awarded official rank but instead purchased it. This special round badge for women was only popular during the late Qing dynasty. Mujia's widely flared sleeves are another late-Qing fashion. Her kingfisher-feather headdress and clothing are quite grand for a commoner and might either represent her wedding attire or be based on details chosen from a pattern book.

建威將軍重慶府人蔣君之仲良

75

Portrait of Father Ruifeng

Qing dynasty, ca. 1890

Inscription in Chinese: Portrait of my deceased father Ruifeng, the General Who Establishes Awe. [signed] Reverently painted by his filial son Qinglin, bathed in scent

Title slip in Chinese: Born on the eighth day at the beginning of the fifth lunar month in the *renxu* year [June 7, 1802]; died on the twenty-first day of the first lunar month in the *yihai* year [February 26, 1875]

Hanging scroll; oil pigments on silk; image only, 123.4 x 67.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, 1991.136

This portrait and the one of Ruifeng's wife (see fig. 7.4) were commissioned by the couple's son, although the dedication says "painted by." The two paintings were created in the same workshop, but minor discrepancies in the palette and patterns on the carpets and chair covers indicate they are by different painters or perhaps were painted a year or two apart.

Western influences are obvious in the use of oil paint and in the high-contrast modeling of the face that emphasizes light and shadow. The technique seems to simulate the look of photography. The disproportion seen here between the face and body is not unusual in Chinese ancestor portraits, but the lower half of the body seems truncated, as if the artist were not entirely competent.

Silver pheasant insignia badge roundel
 Late Qing dynasty, 2d half 19th century
 Silk tapestry (*kesi*) with stitched and painted
 details; diameter 30 cm
 Collection of Shirley Z. Johnson
 Photograph by Charles Rumph

This special round badge, indicating
 purchased rank, carries several good-luck
 symbols surrounding the insignia of a silver
 pheasant. Bats stand for good fortune; other
 attributes such as a gourd are associated
 with a mythological group known as the
 Eight Immortals.

more dramatic effect than encountered in earlier Western-inspired portraits in China. Shadows were rarely used for faces in ancestor portraits before the advent of photography because the uneven lighting contradicted the portrait's mandate to represent a forebear's heavenly endowed, eternal face. A visage dappled with light was referred to as a "yin and yang" face, and just as the yin and yang forces in the cosmos are cyclical, a yin and yang face is impermanent—the facial features seem to change with the passage of light across them. Gradually, though, photographic images began to take root as the norm for the "authentic face," initiating the freer adoption of shading in painted ancestor portraits.

The almost hidden, Manchu-style platform-shoes that peek out from beneath the fur-lined robe in *Portrait of Mother Mujia* represent another feature influenced by photography. Traditionally a female's feet were considered sensual and shoes were, therefore, never pictured in decorous portraits. For reasons still unexplained, the introduction of the camera ushered in the innovation of both Manchu and Han Chinese women displaying their feet in photographs. This new style reverberated in portrait painting, mostly in the case of Manchu women who did not follow the Chinese tradition of foot binding. Shoes for bound feet were apparently too closely linked to their centuries-long heritage in painting as an erotic symbol to be acceptable in a conservative-style portrait painting.¹⁰

In the portraits of both Mujia and Ruifeng, the curves of the faces and drapery folds are picked out in highlight on the raised surfaces and shadow for the gullies. Ruifeng's fur-brimmed cap appears to "fit" better than most Qing hats in paintings

because of the way both the curve of the hat and his skull are articulated with a calculated play of light and dark. The folds on the left arm of his fur coat are highlighted in the manner of Western-style painting, but the bands of light and shadow on the left side seem arbitrary, recalling earlier conventions prior to the adoption by Chinese painters of the principle of a directed light source. Ruifeng's flabby cheeks are singularly unattractive, but the clinical accuracy of their modeling was consistent with the long-held goal of fidelity for ancestor portraits and also with the new level of detail that rivaled the camera's dispassionate eye.

The portraits of Mother Mujia and Father Ruifeng as well as the likeness of the sixth Prince Yi (see fig. 4.6) fortunately are dated, which helps us chart the effect of photography on the development of a relentlessly realistic painting style. The tradition of copying older ancestor portraits and simultaneously circulating them with new portraits in the older, conservative styles complicates attempts to establish firm dates for ancestor portraits. Explicitly lifelike, realistic faces modeled with light and shadow suggest a date after the advent of the camera, but lack of these features does not rule out a late date.

Portrait of Prince Hongming and *Portrait of Lady Wanyan* (see figs. 2, 3) are good examples to study in trying to date ancestor portraits before or after the introduction of the camera. These portraits contain mixed signals, but more likely date later than earlier. Both carry identical dedications from the son who commissioned the portraits in 1767, the year of Hongming's death. Yet, while both paintings could date to that year, there is much reason to consider that they could have been executed closer to 1900. The inscriptions are not written on the paintings directly and could have been cut out from earlier versions and attached to the portraits. This might explain their unusual placement on the lower corners of the paintings' mountings.

Many details in these portraits are associated with the influence of photography, but the possibility that the inscriptions could be contemporary with the paintings forces consideration that a few high-quality, late-eighteenth-century portraits anticipated features later brought to the forefront by the camera. The illusionistic effects in the portraits can be seen in some eighteenth-century palace paintings, but their emphasis here points to images created after the introduction of photography. The play of light on the faces as well as on the drapery folds is indebted either to photography or Western painting. A close look at the prince's and princess's eyes is revealing, for each eyeball has a tiny dot of white that makes it seem as if light is reflected back from a spherical object. This dot has been used in European painting since the Renaissance but can only be observed in Chinese portraits beginning with Castiglione (1688–1766), who used it occasionally in painting members of the imperial family. The same effect can also be observed in some portraits produced in the second half of the eighteenth century in Guangdong Province, where Western influences were strong. But this trick for showing a curved eyeball was not widespread in Chinese painting until after photography brought the effect of reflected light to greater prominence. It cannot be completely ruled out that Hongming's and his wife's portraits were made in 1767 by a court artist well-versed in Western techniques, but that seems unlikely.

The treatment of the carpets in *Portrait of Hongming* and *Portrait of Wanyan* also shows perfect mastery of a Western-influenced perspectival system that reached its greatest popularity after the introduction of photography. In some eighteenth-century portraits, a carpet is treated as a receding ground plane, but the illusion is often simultaneously counteracted by the use of a traditional method to paint the border of the carpet as if it were parallel to the picture plane (see fig. 6.3). The illusion of depth is unbroken in the prince's and princess's portraits, which again suggests a date after the influence of photography. These portraits, however, reinforce the truth that the dates of ancestor portraits are often speculative.

In the late Qing and well into the twentieth century, it was a difficult decision whether to use a photograph or a painted portrait for ritual veneration. The early competition between photographs and painted portraits never fully resolved itself, and even as the two arts have continued to diverge in some ways, in others they have come closer. Over the course of the twentieth century, many portrait painters learned to work from photographs, even introducing graphite into the repertoire for faces because the effect recalled black-and-white photographs, all the while continuing to use traditional bright pigments to complete the painting. The practice of portraitists active in modern Taiwan provides some insights into why painters continue to remain highly valued even while the quality of photographic portraits improves and they become less expensive.¹¹

Only an artist has the ability to compress different aspects of a person into a single image. For example, a painter can be handed photographs of a man's late father at an old age, after a stroke, and of the deceased in his prime and integrate the two aspects in one new image. A portrait of the father when younger is inappropriate for ritual veneration, as is the image of the man distorted by illness. Only a painter can create a composite picture that projects the man's heavenly endowed visage and venerable old age at death. What we learn through stories like this is that ancestor portraits are faithful likenesses, but they are manipulated to meet the social and cultural expectations of the way a ritual portrait should look.

The man who suffered a stroke waited too long to visit a photographer, but often people went to a studio expressly to have a memorial image taken. The passage from Marguerite Duras's *L'Amant* (The lover), discussed in chapter 3, brings attention to this custom from the first half of the twentieth century. Duras described how individuals went to a photographer's only once, when they felt death approaching. In more contemporary times, photography in Chinese communities is treated as it is anywhere else in the world; it has become a favored way of recording happy-looking people engaged in activity. Such images, however, lack decorum and clear focus on the face, so they are inappropriate for use in the annual sacrifices to the ancestors. If a proper memorial photograph has not been taken in life, families can take a casual photograph to a painter who uses it as model to paint a traditional-style ancestor portrait. Or sometimes, a portrait studio will cut a person's head out of a photograph and paste it in position on a painted portrait that shows the body in a standard iconic pose. The result is an awkward, visually disturbing mix of media, but the relationship between face and body is not any more disconnected than in a traditional painted portrait.

Alterations to Suit the Western Market

Western colonialists enjoyed documenting the lifestyles of the foreign places they visited, worked in, and often politically dominated. This included collecting informative objects, and Chinese ancestor portraits were appreciated as handsome records of China's inhabitants. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, outsiders often did not understand ancestor portraits; they were merely attracted by the portraits' compelling immediacy and the dignity and splendid costumes of the sitters. Some Westerners were so impressed by the authority that a portrait's subject seemed to possess that in the eighteenth century foreigners occasionally adopted the pose for their own images.¹² In the 1730s, Danish ship-captains and supercargoes regularly commissioned small clay sculptures of themselves when they sailed to Canton. The sitters were pictured in Western dress seated frontally in a roundbacked chair with their feet on a stool. Sometimes a hand gesture, such as a hand on a thigh, also paralleled what is seen in Chinese ancestor images.¹³ Some of the sculptures the foreigners had made may have been influenced by a tradition popular among some of south China's "boat people," who placed small wooden sculptures of their ancestors on family altars.¹⁴ Portrait paintings of Westerners wearing Qing court-dress and posing as Chinese "ancestors" are also known. These portraits seem to date to around the turn of the twentieth century. Westerners who commissioned the images, perhaps as souvenirs, tended to pose so that their faces were just slightly turned, thus avoiding the stern, unflinching gaze of a fully frontal view.

More common than the instances of Westerners who chose to have themselves painted in a Chinese manner is the Western interest in Chinese portraits for exotic home décor. As mentioned in the introduction, Chinese iconic images have recently experienced a resurgence in popularity. Warmly received from the nineteenth century until the 1940s, the paintings experienced revived interest in the late 1990s. Several visits to antique stores in Beijing in the 1990s revealed that Chinese dealers received enough demand for ancestor portraits that they could sell heavily restored works or newly made fakes that had been mixed in for sale alongside genuine old portraits. Regional portraits from Shanxi Province, which are usually painted on cotton, almost flooded the market for a short period. There was also a generous supply of charming, folk-style portraits on paper, mostly of nineteenth-century date. Authentic portraits of grand officials painted on silk, however, are now rare.

Portraits currently on the market require close scrutiny by collectors to distinguish fakes. Of course, that has always been the case. Richard Pritzlaff himself acquired a forgery—albeit a not very convincing one, which is now in the Sackler's collection. The portrait (fig. 7.7) is purportedly of the Jiaqing empress, whose husband reigned from 1796 to 1820. Examination of the painting can highlight some important points about determining authenticity. While many original portraits may legitimately exhibit some quirky detail, if several anomalies occur together, the portrait is probably not genuine. A number of aspects of the "empress" scroll immediately raise questions. It was painted on low-cost paper of a relatively small size without the use of expensive mineral colors or gold. Why would the imperial patron of an empress' portrait, whether made for use

Spurious Portrait of the Jiaqing Empress

Republic period, ca. 1920–48

Title slip in English: Chia-ch'ing empress

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;

image only, 152.5 x 88.9 cm

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff, \$1991.98

This portrait exemplifies work churned out for a naïve foreign patron who hoped to acquire an imperial portrait. Modest in all regards—size, materials, and the clumsy sketch lines still visible—the painting has no connection to the imperial tradition other than the sitter's costume, which is a poor attempt at showing imperial dress. The English label identifies the sitter as the wife of the Jiaqing emperor (reigned 1796–1820), but the workshop responsible for this forgery was not familiar with the intricacies of court dress and made several obvious mistakes.

in the ancestor cult or some other documentary purpose, have been so stingy? Incongruities in the costume are also giveaways. The woman is pictured wearing the highest level of state dress—a twelve-symbol robe (the sun and moon on the shoulders are two of these symbols)—yet her head is covered by a common woman's flower and kingfisher-feather decorated hat. She wears court beads—but only one strand out of

the set of multiple jeweled chains that were required for formal dress—and earrings—but only one per ear, whereas a Manchu empress would have worn three. The artisans who created the portrait were apparently unfamiliar with genuine court dress and could do no more than create haphazard details.

Moreover, the lacquered chair in the portrait is run-of-the-mill, not a proper throne. Heavy sketch lines around the figure reveal that the portrait was executed by a relatively unskilled hand, which of course is also inconsistent with imperial quality. Chinese artists might leave some traces of sketch lines, but the sloppiness of this portrait points to assembly-line production for quick commercial gain.

The discerning Wu Lai-hsi, who sent Pritzlaff the painting, must have known when he purchased it that the title slip on the outside had to be bogus, but a Westerner in the 1930s and 1940s, before books on Chinese costume were readily available, could easily have been fooled. And that surely was the audience for whom this portrait was intended. Why Wu bought it remains a mystery. Pritzlaff never identified the portrait as a forgery and was rather fond of it, but he never extolled it either, suggesting that he may have harbored suspicions.

The crude quality of the Sackler's "empress" is fairly typical of a number of Chinese portraits in Western collections, although the bulk do not claim to be of imperial family members. Small-sized portraits painted on paper (rather than silk) of officials and their wives in court dress sometimes turn out to be fakes. Some of these questionable portraits were stamped on the back "Made in China," because they were exported from China in commercial trade. An example of a portrait of this type and its stamp are illustrated in figures 7.8 and 7.9. Some paintings were stamped in Chinese with a dealer's description of a painting, such as "man in blue robe," revealing that the portrait was a generic image created for sale. By the late nineteenth century, United States trade regulations with China required commercial goods to be marked with the country of origin, but art objects and antiquities were generally exempt, which explains why so many genuine portraits escaped being stamped.

The ersatz portraits are usually attractive and exhibit all the traditional traits of ancestor portraits, but the faces seem characterless and the clothing is often lacking in detail. The artists presumably were working quickly without any obligation to consult a real face for a model. The generalized faces may have contributed to the perception among some in the West that Chinese ancestor portraits all tend to look alike. Unfortunately, many bogus portraits were not stamped and some are impossible to differentiate from genuine examples.

Demanding customers with discerning taste and ample resources sought fancy portraits painted on silk rather than on paper. As we have seen, George Crofts in Canada, an unnamed ethnographer in the Czech Republic, Bertha Lumm in New York, and Richard Pritzlaff represent this group. They, too, faced hazards in their collecting, especially presented by old portraits that had been doctored.

For example, if a collector made a specific request for a pair of portraits of an official and his wife, but the dealer could not fulfill the order, he might resort to altering an image. What if he had only portraits of men on hand? Since men were the higher ranked sex in patriarchal China, it seems that either more portraits were painted of

7.8

Portrait of a Woman

Qing dynasty, late 19th–20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper;

image only, 97.2 x 43.9 cm

Denver Art Museum; gift of May Wilfley in

memory of her parents, A. R. Wilfley and

Addie M. Wilfley, 1974.46.5

Photograph © 2001 Denver Art Museum

7.9

Stamp on the reverse
of *Portrait of a Woman*
(fig. 7.8)

7.10

Portrait of Unidentified Courtier Altered to Resemble a Woman

Qing dynasty, 18th–19th century with 20th-century alterations

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Národní Galerie, Prague; VM 2402 – 1171/157

Photograph from Národní Galerie

them, or families better preserved their images of men. To meet a customer's request, a dealer could easily transform a male image into the likeness of a female, and this seems to have happened quite often. Two Qing dynasty portraits of court "women" in the Národní collection in Prague (one of which is fig. 7.10) exemplify this practice.¹⁵ The portraits first attracted attention because the sitters wear four pierced earrings in each earlobe, which is not a custom documented for Han or Manchu women. The mystery was solved when it was realized that both paintings had been heavily reworked. Originally, they depicted males in court costume, which artisans overpainted with some of the trappings of female costume. An audience intimately familiar with the gender differences in court dress would not have been fooled by these changes, but an untutored public—such as Western viewers—might not notice the subterfuge. In one portrait, a woman's vest was added over the man's *chaofu* court robe to feminize the costume, but the artisans could think of no way to conceal completely the man's shoes, which are still visible, peeking beneath the hem. Nor could they disguise the man's hat in figure 7.10. The position of the figure's hands also gives away the male gender.

Western love for dragons led to other distortions of portraits. A handsome portrait of a woman in the Sackler's collection was irreparably ruined when a salesman decided her clothing was too plain (see appendix 1 fig. 18). The delicately painted face of this woman contrasts with the cartoonish lizardlike dragons on her coat, which bear little resemblance to traditional Chinese dragon motifs. An X-ray revealed that the woman's coat was originally decorated with a subtle floral design the same dark color as the cloth coat. A twentieth-century dealer apparently decided the portrait needed color and dragons to sell, so he had them added.

Western belief that portraits from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) were more valuable than those from the Qing period because they were older presented another temptation for tampering. A portrait of an official in a red Ming-style robe in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, is an egregious example of amateurish alterations (fig. 7.11). The bizarre crest rail of the lacquered chair is an obvious giveaway. Artisans tried to transform the capelet of the original Qing costume into a crest rail, but the result looks like nothing that ever existed in Chinese furniture. Qing horse-hoof cuffs are poorly disguised by the overpainting of the Ming-style robe, and the center split of the original Qing robe is not completely obliterated, yet no Ming robes had a divided skirt. The awkwardly concocted Ming headgear camouflages a Qing hat.

Although the artisans' changes were clumsy, they seem to have been sufficient to fool the Western market. Another case of a Qing official's portrait having been overpainted so that the figure seems to be wearing Ming clothing is in the Denver Art Museum. An oddly shaped and disproportionately large, black wing-hat covers the original conical hat of Qing style. The wearer's robe is a strange mixture of Ming and Qing features, and the artist could think of no better way to disguise the capelet than to attempt to fashion it into a brocade chair cover. The problem was that in the undocumented portrait a tiger skin already covered the chair, and in customary practice silks were not placed on top of fur pelts. The alterations to this portrait so confused the Denver art curators in 1971 that they designated the painting as Korean, not correcting the mistake until 1994.¹⁶

楊公復
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7.11

Altered Portrait of a Courtier

Qing dynasty, late 18th–19th century with 20th-century alterations; traditionally dated to 16th century

Spurious inscription

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk;

image only, 170.1 x 99.6 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond;

gift of Brigadier General John S. Letcher

Photograph © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The chair rail in this painting is a clumsily altered costume accessory. The shape still reveals the outline of a Qing courtier's capelet, but his robe was overpainted so that it would look like the dress of a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) official.

The question of Korean versus Chinese origin is a genuine concern, however. In several instances it is unclear whether a portrait is Ming Chinese, or Korean from the Choson dynasty (1392–1910). Ming dynasty formal commemorative portraiture—for use both during life and for memorial purposes—had a great influence on the style of Korean portraits. Despite similarities in style and certain types of clothing, it is usually easy to distinguish between portraits of the two nationalities by inscriptions, by special features of rank badges or other clues in the dress, or by the appearance of a Korean woven mat instead of a carpet as a floor covering. The slight turn of face that was common in early Ming portraits was adopted in Korea, where it remained the most popular view for formal portraits even after customs in China shifted to favor strict frontality. Nevertheless, a small subset of Korean portraits exhibits strict frontality and symmetry

for face and body, causing them to be mistaken for Chinese. Some twentieth-century dealers have been ready to exploit this uncertainty to maximize their profits on whichever is selling better—Chinese or Korean works. Some portraits in twentieth-century auctions have been sold as Chinese paintings and then resold as Korean. Changed attributions can sometimes result from new scholarship but also from swings in market prices.

Ancestor Portraits Today

It has been established that the ritual purpose of Chinese ancestor portraits conditioned how they looked. The highly descriptive, documentary treatment lavished on faces, the unwavering frontal stare, and the iconic pose are all perfectly suited to their role as objects of religious veneration. The traditions and intricacies of ancestor worship are changing as Chinese society moves into the twenty-first century, but frontal portraits as memorial images do not seem to be disappearing. The en face image still has significance to represent the eternal ancestor and forge family bonds of continuity. Changes to the framework of the ancestor portrait are relatively minor. While the sumptuous details of court clothing have been abandoned, the fundamentals remain the same.

What has changed more is the Western reception of Chinese ancestor portraits. After first attracting Western attention by virtue of their exoticism and decorative appeal, they fell out of favor and were dismissed as uniformly alike and overly concerned with description and fidelity to external appearance. But now, once again, the Western world has rediscovered an interest in the closely observed frontal face, as attested to by the popularity of portraits by American artist Chuck Close (born 1940; see fig. 3.14). The psychology and motivation behind Close's images and these ritual portraits have nothing in common, but their visual similarities are thought provoking.

Many of Close's portraits from the 1970s shocked American viewers when they first saw them. His portraits of people painted from the neck up in a rigidly frontal orientation seemed disturbing in their ruthlessly close observation of facial features—flaws and all.¹⁷ He centered each face in the middle of the composition, frequently using a grid pattern to plan and proportion his work with a sort of mathematical exactitude that is not dissimilar to Chinese ancestor portraits. Also like Chinese memorial portraits, Close's painted faces have frozen expressions that refuse to offer the viewer any clues to the subject's personality or state of mind. Close often paints from photographs, to avoid active interaction with the subject. The aim is to deconstruct and reconstruct the appearance of a face in formal artistic terms, unburdened by interpretation and projection of personality—either his or the subject's. The result is that Close creates a psychological zone in his portraits that keeps the spectator and subject detached from each other. The effect is eerily like a Chinese ancestor portrait, although Close intensifies the experience by closing in on faces to an unprecedented degree, making viewers feel they are violating the privacy of the portrait subjects.

The genre of Chinese ancestor portraits, which perpetuate the presence of individuals who no longer possess a unique personality but who still have power and require

religious sacrifices, almost seems to presage Close's painting program. The American school of contemporary realism and the Chinese ancestor portrait both work in an idiom that is hyperrealistic and reductionist. Both eschew the tradition of Renaissance portraiture that manipulates physical data to reveal a person's character and, instead, both concentrate on documenting the singularity of human existence by rigorous insistence on fidelity to outward appearance. Contemporary American portraits and the Chinese ancestor portrait are not at all the same genre, but their shared visual affinity is sure to foster renewed Western interest in Chinese ancestor portraits.

Perhaps Richard Pritzlaff was right after all when he forecast that Chinese ancestor portraits would change American opinion about Chinese art. At least he was right that ancestor portraits so long ignored would no longer be considered unsophisticated. They can now be recognized for what they are within their own cultural matrix—how and why they were made—and they can simultaneously be appreciated as aesthetic objects, the visual schema of which suddenly seems very modern.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991) uses the expression “human original” and explores many aspects of what he calls the “authority of likeness” in examining the relationship between persons and their portrait images.
2. Hugo Munsterberg, *Art of the Far East* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1968), 152.
3. Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 65.
4. For a recent example see Ladislav Kesner, Jr., “Artefacted Faces in Early Chinese Art” (paper presented at the conference “Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture,” University of Chicago, Illinois, April 24–26, 1998), 12.
5. Information is based on personal communication between Jan Stuart and Richard G. Pritzlaff as well as on written correspondence between Pritzlaff and other persons. The curatorial department at the Denver Art Museum and James Cahill, professor emeritus, University of California, Berkeley, generously shared their Pritzlaff correspondence. Copies have been deposited in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C.; in the case of correspondence with Cahill, the originals are in the James Cahill Papers in the Freer and Sackler archives.
6. Pritzlaff initially raised cattle on his ranch but later turned to breeding Arabian horses.
7. The house was decorated with Chinese paintings, furniture, and objets d’art that ranged from exquisite to average. Several items, including a rare, early-Qing dynasty *kang* (low) table inlaid with hardwood veneer and precious stones, are of imperial quality. Pritzlaff’s table matches another in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, and was ultimately sold after his death and acquired by Dr. S. Y. Yip of Hong Kong. For an illustration see *Feng hua zai xian: Ming Qing jiaju tezhan* (Splendor of style: Classical furniture from the Ming and Qing dynasties) (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1999), 124–25.
8. Items in the estate have been sold in phases. The Sackler Gallery purchased one portrait in 1997 (see fig. 4.13), but other paintings were unavailable. A group of scrolls was offered for sale on September 13, 1999, at Christie’s East, New York, but it was withdrawn by the estate before the sale. Subsequently, Sotheby’s, New York, auctioned some of these paintings on September 20, 2000.
9. This painting (S1991.99) is illustrated in Stephen Little et al., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), cat. no. 44.
10. A letter from Pritzlaff to Cahill, November 2, 1978, describes his worries. The same topic appears again in a letter from September 27, 1987.
11. Pritzlaff had been encouraged by his close friend Jerry Klinginsmith to call the Sackler. The museum is indebted to the late Mr. Klinginsmith for his assistance and also wishes to acknowledge the help of John C. Pritzlaff, Jr., Richard’s nephew, in bringing the collection to the Sackler.
12. The relationship with Denver was encouraged by Otto Karl Bach, then the director of the Denver Art Museum. Bach was a friend of some of Pritzlaff’s relatives, introduced by them to Pritzlaff. In a letter from Pritzlaff to Cahill, September 27, 1987, Pritzlaff wrote that at the same time he was lending to Denver, he was also lending paintings to Milwaukee, but no institution was named.
13. Priest was invited in July 1948, but it is not known if he actually visited the ranch; whether or not Sickman saw the paintings is also unclear. According to Pritzlaff, Cammann did see the collection.
14. Pritzlaff to Cahill, September 27, 1987.
15. Personal communication, 1990.
16. In a letter to Charles Moyer, September 20, 1989 (photocopy in the James Cahill Papers in the Freer and Sackler archives), Pritzlaff wrote that the first portraits he purchased were images of Serer Ch’en [sic] and his

- images of Serer Ch'en [*sic*] and his wife. Although Pritzlaff recorded these identities in English, no official of that name has been identified. Moreover, based on the visual characteristics of the two portraits, it is doubtful they were originally made as a pair. Married couples are usually pictured in a setting with identical chairs and carpets.
17. According to a letter from Pritzlaff to Otto Karl Bach written in 1947, Pritzlaff received the armor that year from Wu Lai-hsi. Yet in 1990, Pritzlaff stated that the armor numbered among his most prized purchases of 1937 (personal communication). The Denver Art Museum accepted the armor on loan in the late 1940s and kept it until 1970 (see a letter to Pritzlaff from Robert Moes, curator at the Denver Art Museum, April 20, 1970). In 1990, Pritzlaff could not find the armor and said he no longer remembered what had happened to it.
 18. Pritzlaff to Milo C. Beach, January 31, 1990.
 19. Pritzlaff wrote this comment on a scrap of paper included with an undated letter to James Cahill. He said he made the observation when looking at Wu Lai-hsi's favorite portrait, which he reported was the image of a woman published in Hope Danby, *The Garden of Perfect Brightness: The History of the Yuan Ming Yuan and of the Emperors Who Lived There* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950), plate inserted between pages 32–33. It is not clear if Pritzlaff ever owned this painting, but he did not show it to the Sackler's curators when they visited the ranch.
 20. Information about Wu Lai-hsi has been gleaned from several sources, including a letter from Pritzlaff to Charles Moyer, September 20, 1989, and to his friend Jerry Klinginsmith, September 25, 1990. Other information was obtained by interviewing the scholar Geng Baochang in Beijing and the collector-dealer Charlotte Horstman, formerly of Hong Kong and now New York City. The author thanks Julian Thompson, cochairman, Sotheby's, Asia, and James Lally, of J. J. Lally and Company, for offering leads in tracking down individuals who knew Wu Lai-hsi.
 21. Wu sent Sir Percival and Lady David two superb Chenghua-period (1465–87) *doucai* cups from his stock in Peking. One is decorated with a grapevine design and the other is a prized "chicken cup." Both are now in the Percival David Foundation, London. See Anthony Hua Tien Lin, "An Interview with Lady David," *Oriental Arts* 23, no. 4 (April 1992): 60.
 22. Sotheby's London auction catalogue, May 26, 1937, *Chinese Porcelain of the Fifteenth Century in Underglaze Blue and Enamel Colours and Monochrome and Enamel Wares of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties from a Well-known Collector, Formerly Resident in Peiping*. I thank Julian Thompson for bringing the catalogue to my attention.
 23. Personal communication, 1999.
 24. For more about sources of imperial and imperial-style portraits on the market in China in the early twentieth century see Alan Priest, *Portraits of the Court of China* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1942), 1–2.
 25. In addition to personal communication, Pritzlaff states in a letter to Cahill, September 20, 1989, his belief that he owned four or five scrolls by Castiglione.
 26. For the influence of Castiglione's style and its dissemination among Chinese painters see Nie Chongzheng, "Zhong Xi yishu jiaoliu zhong de Lang Shining" (Castiglione and artistic exchange between China and the West), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 2 (1988): 72–79.
 27. This handscroll resembles works now identified as having been painted in a loosely organized workshop in Peking known as the "back gate," which was located behind the palace. In the early part of the twentieth century, its artists specialized in forgeries of Castiglione's works. For a brief history of this workshop see Wang Yanchao, "Houmen dao: Minguo shiqi de shuhua huopin" (Back gate [workshop] fakes: Republic period commercial paintings and calligraphies), in *Shoucangjia* 1, no. 1 (October 1993): 42–43. The artist Ma Jin (1900–1971) is one possible contender who might have painted or worked on the Sackler's scroll. He painted several works in Castiglione's style with cypress trees similar to those in the Sackler's scroll.
 - When Wu Lai-hsi owned *European Ladies on Horseback* in Peking, doubts about it were expressed by the late Professor Max Loehr, who opined that a date in the Daoguang period (1821–50) might be appropriate for the scroll. See Wu Lai-hsi to Pritzlaff, May 8, 1946 (photocopy in the James Cahill Papers in the Freer and Sackler archives).
 - This book adheres to the convention adopted by Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943–44) in citing 1796 (not 1795) as the end of the Qinglong reign, which terminated in February 1796, when the emperor abdicated.
 28. Pritzlaff to Cahill, November 29, 1978.
 29. Wu Lai-hsi to Alan Priest, November 19, 1947 (photocopy in the James Cahill Papers in the Freer and Sackler archives). Also see, Priest, *Portraits of the Court of China*, 2, and Priest, "Portraits of the Court of China," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 1, no. 5 (January 1943): 184–88. Wu's letter also included a tantalizing bit of uncorroborated information that accords with one of Priest's observations in his 1942 catalogue, in which he asserted that the Qing court portraits were made in multiple versions and some of them were "later copies."
 - Wu Lai-hsi believed that between 1927 and 1928 all Qing dynasty formal commemorative portraits kept in the palace museum had been surreptitiously copied at the order of an officer under the supervision of General Zhang Xueliang (died 1998). Wu claimed the copies were made for the Qing imperial household, which had requested to have their ancestor portraits taken from the museum and returned to them as personal property. According to Wu, the copies were taken to Manchuria by the imperial family and were seized there in 1945 by the Russians.
 30. Pritzlaff to the Sackler Gallery, October 13, 1989.
 31. Pritzlaff to Cahill, dated on the basis of content to circa 1976–77.
 32. Pritzlaff to Cahill, October 12, 1988.
 33. Pritzlaff to Cahill, dated on the basis of content to circa 1976–77. This letter also states, "The Freer Gallery told the Geographic that the painting was not uniformly good as in the brochure of the Imperial Portraits." It is unclear whom at the Freer is quoted, nor is it clear what brochure is meant. In the same letter, Pritzlaff wrote that a Mr. Knex, a former "Smithsonian Head," had requested Pritzlaff through a third party to "donate some things like the Ming tables. That seems to be his only interest." No Smithsonian leader has been named Knex, so again it is unclear with whom Pritzlaff was in contact.
 34. Pritzlaff to Cahill, January 21, 1979. Wu Lai-hsi wrote to Pritzlaff (June 17, 1947) that he had hired translators to work on the *Tung Hua Lu*, but there is no way to ascertain the nature of the project (photocopy in the James Cahill Papers in the Freer and Sackler archives).
 35. Pritzlaff to Cahill, September 27, 1987.
 36. Pritzlaff to Cahill, February 2, 1989.
 37. Pritzlaff to Cahill dated on the basis of content to circa 1976–77. In a letter of January 21, 1979, Pritzlaff asked Cahill to put him in touch with Fang Chaoying, a contributing editor to the *Ming Biographical Dictionary*, in the hope that he would use Pritzlaff's portraits as book illustrations.
 38. Robert Moes, curator of Oriental Art, Denver Art Museum, to Pritzlaff, March 10, 1970.
 39. Personal communication with Cahill, November 1998, and corroborated by Cahill's correspondence with H. Ross Perot's daughter, Nancy P. Mulford, December 26, 1986.
 40. Mulford to Cahill, September 11, 1987.
 41. Ibid.
 42. Pritzlaff to the Sackler Gallery, October 13, 1989. Pritzlaff often used phrases like this in reference to his collection.
 43. George Crofts, who purchased ancestor portraits in China around 1920 for the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, wrote in his notes from that year that most of the portraits he encountered had mountings in poor condition, so he had them remounted.

- in China. Wu Lai-hsi probably also had some of these portraits remounted. See Royal Ontario Museum Far Eastern Department archives.
44. Before throwing away old mounting fabrics, the conservators cut out samples to keep on record as a resource for future studies on the history of scroll mounting in China.
 45. This painting is figure 5.1. When it came to the Sackler, the mounting was in such poor condition that the museum staff remounted it, restoring the mounting to a standard length.
 46. Sometimes the sitter's name and birth and death dates appear written on a spirit tablet depicted in a portrait. Analogous to removing a *shitang* inscription to conceal a family's identity, the name on a spirit tablet is sometimes abraded or covered over with a sticker bearing the word "longevity."
 47. As an example of their popularity as decorations, see a 1936 sales catalogue exclusively devoted to formal Chinese portraits, mostly ancestor likenesses, which lists forty-eight items for sale. Yamanaka and Company, *Catalogue of Chinese Portrait Paintings of Ming Dynasty* (New York, Boston, Chicago, 1936).
 48. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, sold these pillows in 1999. A product marketed by the Gumps department store in San Francisco in 2000 is another example of the fashion trend for ancestor portraits. Gumps reproduced a pair of portraits in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London as velvet wall hangings.
 49. *NM Pet: Neiman Marcus by Mail* (Dallas: Neiman Marcus, Pet99, 1999), 28, item 29a.
 50. Austin Coates, *Myself a Mandarin* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1968), 37.
 51. For a list of institutions the authors visited to view ancestor portraits see the acknowledgments at the front of this book.
 52. Ladislav Kesner, Jr., "Memory, Likeness and Identity in Chinese Ancestor Portraits," *Bulletin of the National Gallery in Prague* 3–4 (1993–94): 4–14.
 53. Notes kept in the Asian art department of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada.
 54. A large set of family portraits can be seen in the Qingzhou Museum in Shandong Province. The earliest in the set depicts Zhao Bingzhong (1573–1626), who was China's top examination candidate in 1598. In 1983, his thirteenth-generation descendant donated to the museum Zhao's test paper bearing the seal of approval of the Wanli emperor (reigned 1573–1620) and he included Zhao's portrait and those of several of his descendants, whose likenesses were closely modeled after his.
 55. The Nanjing Museum has published its portrait collection. See Liang Baiquan, *Selected Chinese Portrait Paintings from the Nanjing Museum* (Hong Kong: Cultural Relics Publishing House and Tai Yip, 1993).
 56. The portrait collection at the Liaoning Museum was established by the eminent scholar and former director of the museum, Yang Renkai (born 1915), who acquired ancestor portraits in Peking's Liulichang antiques district at about the same time that Pritzlaff was buying scrolls from Wu Lai-hsi. Yang wanted to document the genre in case it disappeared due to the popularity of the camera and social changes in attitudes about ancestor worship. The museum, however, did not create a special exhibition of the material until 1998, and unfortunately no catalogue was published. The Taipei exhibition, which drew upon private collections in Taiwan, was published. See *Ming Qing guanxianghua tulu* (Catalogue of portrait paintings of figures in official dress of the Ming and Qing dynasties), with a preface by Chen Du-cheng (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan yishu jiaoyu guan, 1998).
 57. Several substantial private collections of formal commemorative and ancestor portraits are now being formed by Chinese collectors in Taiwan and New York. One collector, Chang Chien-fu in Taiwan, has been buying old portraits in mainland China and Taiwan and having them remounted and conserved in Taipei. Many of Chang's portraits appear in *Ming Qing guanxianghua tulu*.
- ## CHAPTER ONE
1. Sherman E. Lee, "Varieties of Portraiture in Chinese and Japanese Art," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 64 (1977): 118–19. Ancestor portraits were not considered to be art, as Joan Hornby notes in "Chinese Ancestral Portraits: Some Late Ming and Ming Style Ancestral Portraits in Scandinavian Museums," *Bulletin of Far Eastern Antiquities* 70 (2000): 173–271. We are grateful to Hornby for supplying a prepublication copy of her article.
 2. David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
 3. See Zheng Yan, "Muzhu huaxiang yanjiu" (Research on portrait paintings of tomb occupants) in *Liu Dunyuan xiansheng jinian wenji* (Festschrift for Mr. Liu Dunyuan) (Jizhou: Shangdong daxue chubanshe, 1997), 450.
 4. Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), chaps. 1–2.
 5. Wu, Hung, "Art in Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992): 117.
 6. According to Michael Loewe, this kind of banner is "a talisman intended to convey one of the souls (*hun*) of the deceased emperor to the next world." Michael Loewe, "The Imperial Way of Death in Han China," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 107–8. On the early use of portraits in funerary rituals see Hornby, "Chinese Ancestral Portraits."
 7. See a lacquered basket from the second century A.D. excavated in Lolang, Korea, which during the Han dynasty was a Chinese settlement. Illustrated in Koizumi Akira, *Rakurō Saikyō-tsu* (The tomb of the painted basket of Lolang) (Keijo: Chōsen koseki kenkyūkai, 1934).
 8. Julia K. Murray, "The Hangzhou Portraits of Confucius and Seventy-two Disciples (*Sheng xian tu*): Art in the Service of Politics," *Art Bulletin* 74, no. 1 (1992): 7–18.
 9. Keith G. Stevens, "Portrait and Ancestral Images on Chinese Altars," *Arts of Asia* 19, no. 1 (1989): 135–45.
 10. Worship of deceased parents or grandparents occurred at altars erected inside the home and included the active participation of women, but worship of more distant ancestors in ancestral halls involved only male descendants. See the essays in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. David Faure, "The Emperor in the Village: Representing the State in South China," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph McDermott, 293–94, 294, n. 64.
 13. On the construction of lineages and ancestral halls in Qing times see Rubie S. Watson, "The Creation of a Chinese Lineage: The Teng of Ha Tsuen, 1669–1751," *Modern Asian Studies* 16, no. 1 (1982): 69–100.
 14. *Analekts*, XVII.xxi.1–6; also XIV.xliii.1–2; II.v.3. Quotation based on James Legge, trans. *The Chinese Classics*, 3d ed. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. 1, 147.
 15. Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600–1900* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9.
 16. This makes a remark by Lord Macartney in the eighteenth century even more puzzling. In his journal of his embassy to the court of the Qianlong emperor in 1793–94, Macartney wrote that the Chinese who came aboard the ship carrying him to Peking "observing the Emperor of China's picture in the cabin, immediately fell flat on their faces before it, and kissed the ground several times with great devotion." See J. L. Cranmer-Byng, ed., *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney During His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-Lung, 1793–1794* (New York: Longmans, 1962), 65. Several explanations come to mind. Macartney could have been carrying a "picture" of the emperor drawn by a foreigner, several of which are cited in the work (*ibid.*, 315–16; 385, n. 92). The picture could have been created for

- export: examples of this type, which exist in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, are actually not likenesses of the emperor. Or he possessed a painting presented to him as a representative of the British monarch.
17. Patricia B. Ebrey, "Portrait Sculptures in Imperial Ancestral Rites in Song China," *T'oung Pao* 83, nos. 1–3 (1997): 46, n. 13.
 18. Ibid., 87. But Edward H. Schafer cites a ninth-century record of the imperial portrait being bestowed on "a friend." See his "T'ang Imperial Icon," *Sinologica* 7 (1963): 160.
 19. Schafer, *ibid.*
 20. Ebrey, "Portrait Sculptures in Imperial Ancestral Rites," 46.
 21. Song dynasty imperial portraits thus depict husbands and wives in separate paintings. The tradition of separate but paired portraits was also followed as a common practice for ancestor portraits of commoners in Ming and Qing times, although double portraits with a husband and wife seated next to each other also were created in the Ming and Qing. See Hornby, "Chinese Ancestral Portraits."
 22. State altars in China were classified within a three-grade hierarchy. The rankings indicated their relative importance, fixing the quantity and types of offerings, music, dance, and other components of rituals to be performed at the altar. For a discussion see Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/Performance in Eighteenth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), chap. 5.
 23. T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 7 (1993): 149–219.
 24. Ebrey, "Portrait Sculptures in Imperial Ancestral Rites," 87.
 25. Deborah A. Sommer, "Icons of Imperial Ritual in the Ming Dynasty" (paper presented at the Conference on State and Ritual in East Asia, Paris, June 28–July 1, 1995).
 26. Deborah A. Sommer, "Images into Words: Ming Confucian Iconoclasm," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 29, no. 2 (1994): 10–11.
 27. Ibid., 10.
 28. Evelyn S. Rawski, "A Historian's Approach to Chinese Death Ritual," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 31.
 29. Patricia B. Ebrey, *Chu Hsi's Family Rituals: A Twelfth-Century Chinese Manual for the Performance of Cappings, Weddings, Funerals, and Ancestral Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 78.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Anning Jing, "The Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi by Anige (1245–1306), A Nepali Artist at the Yuan Court," *Artibus Asiae* 54, no. 1/2 (1994): 40–86. Quotation from James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, "Kesi: Silk Tapestry," in *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 60–61.
 32. On the Taixi zongyin yuan see Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 6167. A slightly different interpretation is given in Julie Emerson, Jennifer Chen, and Mimi Gardner Gates, *Porcelain Stories: From China to Europe* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum with University of Washington Press, 2000), 53, which states that the Taixi zhongyin yuan was "a court palace where portraits of deceased emperors and empresses were installed to receive offerings."
 33. Watt and Wardwell, "Kesi: Silk Tapestry," 61.
 34. Jing, "Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi," 53.
 35. Dieter Kuhn, *A Place for the Dead: An Archaeological Documentary on Graves and Tombs of the Song Dynasty (960–1279)* (Heidelberg: Edition Forum, 1996), 48–49, fig. 7.18, and Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "Yuan Period Tombs and Their Decoration: Cases at Chifeng," *Oriental Art* 36, no. 4 (1990–91): 198–221.
 36. Steinhardt, "Yuan Period Tombs and Their Decoration," 199, 202, 205; figs. 2, 5, 10. And see Liu Hengwu, "Shaanxi Pucheng Dongercun Yuan mubihua" (Yuan dynasty tomb wall painting in the town of Donger in Pucheng county, Shaanxi Province), *Shoucangjia* 34, no. 2 (1999): 16–18.
 37. Kuhn, *Place for the Dead*, 49.
 38. See Shan Guoqiang, "Xiaoxianghua lishi gaishu" (An overview of the historical development of portrait painting), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 2 (1997): 68, on "robe and cap likenesses" (*yiguan xiang*), a term in use since at least the Song dynasty to refer to stiffly formal commemorative images. A wooden portrait sculpture held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art is said to be "so like the Ming funerary portraits with which we are perfectly familiar that we may be sure it is a portrait and Ming." See Alan Priest, "Note on a Chinese Portrait," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum* 30, no. 8 (1935): 166. A portrait statue of the Yongzheng emperor also existed in the Shouhuangdian: its photograph appeared in *Gugong zhouban* 88 (1931): 47 and is reproduced by Jian Songcun, "Jingshan Shouhuangdian —tan Qingdai di hou xiang yizhi an" (The Shouhuangdian in Jingshan—on the movement of the images of Qing emperors and empresses), *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 1, no. 9 (1983): 47.
 39. Sommer, "Images into Words." According to John Shryock, *The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius: An Introductory Study* (New York: Century, 1931), 139, the removal of images "makes the Confucian temples strikingly different from Buddhist and most Taoist temples."
 40. Jing, "Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi," 74.
 41. Nie Chongzheng, "Di, hou xiaoxiang hua suotan" (A chat about portraits of emperors and empresses), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 1 (1980): 64–80.
 42. Li Lincan, "Gugong bowuyuan de tuxianghua" (The Palace Museum's portrait paintings), *Gugong jikan* 5, no. 1 (1970): 51–61. The collection, which originally included portraits of meritorious officials, was apparently more than three times larger during the Qing dynasty: see Jiang Fucong, "Guoli gugong bowuyuan cang Qing Nanxundian tuxiang kao" (An inquiry into the paintings from the Nanxundian held in the National Palace Museum), *Gugong jikan* 8, no. 4 (1974): 1–16, and the list of paintings in *Da Qing huidian*, *juan* 90. Zhang Naiwei, *Qing gong shuwen* (Jottings on the Qing palaces) (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1990), 395–400, quotes archival documents on the treatment of these paintings, which were remounted and restored in 1747.
 43. Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 210.
 44. Ibid., 207–10.
 45. Evelyn S. Rawski, "The Imperial Way of Death: Ming and Ch'ing Emperors and Death Ritual," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*.
 46. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 286–87.
 47. *Da Qing huidian shili* (Collected regulations and precedents of the Qing dynasty) (1814 ed., reprinted in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan sanji* [Collectanea of modern Chinese historical materials, 3d collection], ed. Shen Yunlong [Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1991–92], vols. 631–40. Taken from *juan* 334). The chronology for the Qianlong emperor's death ritual is taken from *Renzong Rui huangdi shilu* (Veritable records of Renzong, Emperor Rui), Jiaqing 4 (1799), reprinted in *Qing shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986).
 48. *Da Qing huidian shili* (Collected regulations and precedents of the Qing dynasty) (1896 ed., reprinted as *Qing huidian shili*, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1991), *juan* 426: a set of the veritable records was also included for shipment to Shengjing.
 49. For details see *Da Qing huidian tu* (Collected regulations and precedents of the Qing dynasty with illustrations) 1899 ed., *juan* 9.
 50. See the discussion of first-rank sacrifices in the *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896 ed.), *juan* 415–33.
 51. The arrangement of portraits and ritual sequence is detailed in *Da Qing huidian tu*, *juan* 9, Board of Rites 9.
 52. Jian Songcun, "Jingshan Shouhuangdian."

53. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 285–89. See *Rixia jiuwenkao* (Jottings about Peking). N.p., 1774 ed., 19.14a–18a.
 54. *Da Qing huidian, Yongzheng chao* (Collected regulations of the Qing during the Yongzheng reign), comp. Yinlu et al., in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, ed. Shen Yunlong (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1995), *juan* 95, Board of Rites 39.
 55. Jin Jishui and Zhou Shachen, *Wangfu shenghuo shilu* (Veritable records of life in the princely establishments) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1988), 9–10, 66–67, 72–73.
 56. Cao Xueqin, *The Story of the Stone*, trans. David Hawkes (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977), vol. 2, chap. 53, 570–71.
 57. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, chap. 53, 555–82 offers detailed information about a wealthy mid-eighteenth-century family's celebration of the New Year, including descriptions of the separate halls for the tablets and portraits.
 58. David Kidd, *Peking Story* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1988), 104–5.
- ## CHAPTER TWO
1. Decades ago E. H. Gombrich pointed out that “The form of a representation cannot be divorced from its purpose and the requirements of the society in which the given visual language gains currency,” which is germane to ancestor portraits. See E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1959), 90.
 2. Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600–1900* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.
 3. Huang Miaozi, “Cong chuanshen xiao-gao shuoqi” (Discussion of a small album of portrait sketches), *Zhongguo meishu* 9 (1984): 63–64.
 4. Stephen F. Teiser, “Popular Religion,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 2 (May 1995): 380.
 5. This painting is dated 1861. Other rebuses for good fortune, including a basin filled with goldfish, also appear in the foreground. In 1999 the painting belonged to the Hong Kong antique dealer Chan Yue Kee of 140 Hollywood Road.
 6. In a quest to supply complete pairs to buyers, dealers often resorted to “mixing and matching” similar portraits when one of a pair was missing. Some museums and private collections contain false pairs because the scrolls have not been studied carefully. For an example see two portraits published in Rose Kerr, ed., *Chinese Art and Design: The T. T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1991). Despite the museum's assertion that these scrolls represent a pair, the different settings strongly suggest otherwise.
 7. In our opinion, joint portraits of a husband and wife are more common in Ming and Ming-style works than in portraits of the Qing dynasty. For a dissenting view see Joan Hornby, “Chinese Ancestral Portraits,” 173–271.
 8. In our opinion, the attendants represent servants. For a different view see Stephen Little, “A Memorial Portrait of Zhuang Guan,” *Oriental Art* 45, no. 2 (summer 1999): 62–74, who suggests the youths may be the deceased's children. The presence of servants signified wealth and high social position for a portrait's subject. Attendants similar to those labeled by Little as the deceased's children also sometimes appear in memorial portraits of celibate monks, which indicates the youths are conventional servant figures and not descendants.
 9. Shanxi Province seems to have been the biggest producer of portraits painted on cotton cloth, but cotton was also used in Henan Province and perhaps other regions too. No systematic study of this has been undertaken. See Wang Zhaowen, *Zhongguo minjian meishu chuanji* (Compendium of Chinese folk arts) (Ji'nan: Shangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), 179–80.
 10. In some large Shanxi portraits, some of the individuals have realistic faces, while others are blank. According to modern folk tradition, the featureless faces represent individuals whose visages could not be reliably reconstructed by a painter. Examples include individuals who moved away from the clan or whose corpses could not be recovered after death. In actuality, most of the faces must have been painted based on imaginative reconstructions, but the folk explanation reflects the belief that ancestors' faces should be based on an accurate model.
 11. One such portrait was in the possession of Sydney L. Moss, Ltd., in London in the fall of 2000.
 12. The order of the tablets in this painting is unorthodox. Here they are arranged chronologically from right to left with the oldest generation on the right. Usually the most senior generation's tablets appear at the center and the tablets of the most recent generations appear on the far right and left.
 13. See Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chap. 13.
 14. For standard biographical formats see David S. Nivison, “Aspects of Traditional Chinese Biography,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 21 (1962): 459.
 15. Another album painting that reveals a portrait of a formally clothed official on display in a casual garden building is seen in *Dongzhuang tu* (Eastern villa), attributed to Shen Zhou (1427–1509) and now in the Nanjing Museum.
 16. A translation of the inscription by Mark Elliott appears in appendix 2.
 17. See Ka Bo Tsang, “Portraits of the Meritorious Officials: Eight Examples from the First Set Commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor,” *Arts Asiatique* 47 (1992): 69–88.
 18. Even without the signature of Mangguri (also Mang-ku-li), the artist of the Sackler's portrait can be identified with certainty based on comparison with other signed portraits. Mangguri painted several portraits of Prince Guo. See *Portrait of Prince Guo*, signed and dated 1729, in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri; published in Waikam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1980), 352–53, no. 260. Also see *Portrait of Prince Guo* by Mangguri, with background painted by Jiang Tingxi (1669–1732), in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, published in *Zhongguo meishu quanji huihuabian: Qingdai huihua (zhong)* (Qing painting [middle volume] in the complete compendium of Chinese art) 10 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988–89), pl. 144.
 19. The anonymous painting of the young prince was owned by Richard G. Pritzlaff, but because it was left to his estate it did not come to the Sackler Gallery. For a reproduction see *Christie's East: Asian Decorative Arts*, New York, Monday, September 13, 1999, sale 8275, Lot no. 203 (withdrawn).

CHAPTER THREE

1. For an insightful investigation into the concept of “body” in Chinese art see John Hay, “The Body Invisible in Chinese Art?,” in *Body, Subject and Power in China*, eds. Angela Zito and Tani E. Bartow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 42–77.
2. The Majiayao culture was centered in the region of modern Gansu Province. This vessel is briefly discussed in Xiaoneng Yang, ed., *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from the People's Republic of China* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art/Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 1999), 77, cat. no. 9.
For a discussion of stick-figure representations on prehistoric pottery see Helmut Brinker, “On the Origin of the Human Image in Chinese Art,” *Kaikodo Journal* 3 (spring 1997): 26.
3. Dietrich Seckel, “The Rise of Portraiture in Chinese Art,” *Artibus Asiae* 53, nos. 1/2 (1993): 7–8.
4. The banners are now in the Hunan Provincial Museum. For an illustration of both, see *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihuabian—yuanshi shehui zhi Nanbei chao huihua* (Painting from the prehistoric period to the Northern and Southern Dynasties in the complete compendium of Chinese art) 1 (Beijing: Remin meishu chubanshe, 1986): pls. 43–44. For a detailed general discussion see Huang Wenkun, “Zhanguo bohua” (Painted banners from the Warring States period), *Zhongguo wenwu* 3 (1980): 31–32. For discussion of the banners as portraits

- see Zheng Yan, "Muzhu huaxiang yan-jiu" (Research on portrait paintings of tomb occupants) in *Liu Dunyuan xiansheng jinian wenji* (Festschrift for Mr. Liu Dunyuan) (Jizhou: Shangdong daxue chubanshe, 1997): 450; and Shan Guoqiang, "Xiaoxianghua lishi gaishu," 60.
5. See Seckel, "The Rise of Portraiture," 12.
 6. Wang Yanshou (ca. A.D. 124–ca. 148) described the painting of palace murals of malevolent and meritorious men and their wives in order that "their evil may serve to warn later generations while their good may be an example to posterity," as cited in Susan Bush and Hsio-Yen Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), 26.
 7. For an introduction to physiognomy see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 368ff. For a pathbreaking article on the relationship between physiognomy and portraiture see Mette Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate: An Investigation of the Relationship between Formal Portraiture, Especially Ancestral Portraits, and Physiognomy (*xiangshu*) in China," in *International Colloquium on Chinese Art History* (1991), pt. 2 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1991), 717–48.
 8. Xie He's statement is cited in Bush and Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 54.
 9. The portraits resemble brush and ink paintings, though they are actually drawn in clay thread-relief on bricks. The thin strands of clay that were used to outline the figures resemble the effect of ink brushwork. For illustrations and discussion of the portraits see Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
 10. Seckel, "The Rise of Portraiture," 9.
 11. About mummification see Doris Croissant, "Der Unsterbliche Leib: Anneneffigies und Reliquienporträt in der Porträtplastik Chinas und Japans" (The immortal body: Ancestor effigies and relic portraits in the portrait sculpture of China and Japan), in *Das Bildnis in der Kunst des Orients* (The portrait in the art of the Orient), Martin Kraatz et al., eds. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner: 1990), 235–60. Also see Helmut Brinker, "Body, Relic and Image in Zen Buddhist Portraiture," in *Portraiture, International Symposium on Art Historical Studies 6* (Kyoto: Society for International Exchange of Art Historical Studies, 1987), 46–61.
 12. Cited in Bush and Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 224.
 13. *Ibid.*, 227.
 14. For a cogent argument that the portrait in Ouyang's family was an ancestor portrait see Helga Stahl, "Ancestral Portraits in Northern Song China" (paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies annual meeting, Boston, 1999).
 15. For a similar translation see Bush and Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 225.
 16. Chen Zao, "Jianghu zhangweng ji lun xieshen" (On portraiture in the collected writings of the Old Man of Rivers and Lakes) cited in Yu Jianhua, ed., *Zhongguo hualuan leibian*, vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 471. For a translation of some other comments by Chen see Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate," 721.
 17. This quote is from *Er Cheng ji* (Collected works of the two Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao [1032–1085] and Cheng Yi [1033–1107]) as cited in Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate," 724.
 18. For a partial translation see Herbert Franke, "Two Yüan Treatises on the Technique of Portrait Painting," *Oriental Art* 3, no. 1 (1950): 27–32.
 19. For a discussion of some modern portrait techniques see Zhong Youfang, "Yifu xiaoxianghua de tansheng" (The anniversary of a portrait) in *Zhongguo minjian xiaoxianghua* (Chinese vernacular portraiture). Reprint of *Hansheng* magazine, (Taipei: Hansheng zazhi, 1994), vol. 1, 8–38.
 20. For a similar translation see Franke, "Two Yüan Treatises on the Technique of Portrait Painting," 29–30.
 21. The seventeenth-century novel *Jinpingmei* (Plum in the golden vase) illustrates both the popularity and expense of ancestor portraits in the Ming. In chapter 63, the protagonist Ximen Qing pays ten Chinese ounces of silver and a bolt of silk worth two ounces of silver to commission two memorial portraits at the death of one of his consorts. At the time, a lacquer bed inlaid with mother-of-pearl decoration cost sixty ounces. The author may have slightly inflated the price of the ancestor portrait for satirical reasons, but the sum reflects that memorial portraits were not inexpensive. For a full account of this scene in *Jinpingmei* see Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 91–92.
 22. Jonathan Chaves, "The Expression of Self in the Kung-an School: Non-Romantic Individualism," in *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature*, ed. Robert E. Hegel and Richard C. Hessney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 142.
 23. The text on the painting is transcribed in *Ming Qing guanxianghua tulu* (Catalogue of portrait paintings of figures in official dress of the Ming and Qing dynasties) with a preface by Chen Du-cheng (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan yishu jiaoyu guan, 1998), 215. The painting is illustrated in color on page 180, pl. 152.
 24. For a fuller discussion of this incident see Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, 93.
 25. *Ibid.*, 93.
 26. *Sancai tuhui* (Illustrated encyclopedia) is one Ming source that published physiognomic charts. See Wang Qi, comp., *Sancai tuhui*, vol. 4 (1607; reprint, Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970).
 27. For an illustration of the ten faces see *Qi Wang shi michuan zhi renfeng jian yuanli xiangfa chuanshu* (Wang's secrets about understanding man's character through the principles of physiognomy) reprinted in Wang Yaoting, "Xiaoxiang, xiangshi, xiangfa" (Portraiture, phrenology, and physiognomy), in *Meiyu yuekan* 99 (1998): 26.
 28. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), 132–41. Some scholars argue, on the contrary, that the iconic pose existed prior to the adoption of Buddhism. The archaeologist K. C. Chang proposes that the most ancient form of the character used to write the name of the Shang dynastic house includes a pictograph of worshippers kneeling before a forward-facing ancestral image. For more on the origin of frontality in figural representation in China see Zheng Yan, "Muzhu huaxiang yanjiu," 457.
 - The masklike, schematic "faces" on Chinese prehistoric jades (*cong*) and ancient bronzes are always frontal, but these visages are divorced from any suggestion of a body and do not explicitly represent human beings. It can be argued that these images belong to a tradition outside of the development of the frontal pose in human representation.
 29. Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, 134.
 30. Zheng Yan, "Muzhu huaxiang yanjiu," 457.
 31. Ladislav Kesner, Jr., "Memory, Likeness and Identity in Chinese Ancestor Portraits," *Bulletin of the National Gallery in Prague* 3–4 (1993–94): 12.
 32. Kesner's claim of mutual gaze is difficult to support. An anecdote in a story by the twentieth-century author Lu Xun is the only text that comes to mind to support the notion of mutual gaze, and the evidence suggests it was not standard practice. See Lu Xun, "The Loner," in *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, trans. William A. Lyell (English reprint, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 323–24, in which he wrote: My father was still alive and we were well enough off so that during the first month of the lunar New Year we'd hang up paintings of the ancestors and provide them with lavish sacrifices. I loved to gaze at those paintings. . . . An elderly maid would always hold me up to one of the paintings, point, and say: 'This is your very own grandmother. Pay your respects to her so she'll help you grow up good and fast and make you healthy as a lively young tiger.' . . . As I looked at [the woman in the painting], she looked back. What's more a smile gradually gathered at the corners of her mouth. I knew she must love me very much.

- To an imaginative boy held up to an ancestor portrait, the portrait's subject might offer a compassionate, engaging glance, but this is not the manner in which adults approached these paintings. The very oddity of the idea might have inspired Lu Xun to write this passage.
33. Wen C. Fong, "Imperial Portraiture in the Song, Yuan, and Ming periods," *Ars Orientalis* 25 (1995): 47–60.
 34. Zhang Qiya, "Xiezhen yishu de kuibao—'Mingren xiaoxiang' ji 'Sheng chao Songjiang bangyan huixiang'" (Extraordinary treasures in the art of portraiture: Ming portraiture and portraits of the famous statesmen of Songjiang County in the Ming) in *Nanjing bowuyuan cang-baolu* (Catalogue of the collected treasures in the Nanjing Museum) (Nanjing: Nanjing bowuyuan, 1992), 212.
 35. See the translated and annotated version of the original text in Alexander C. Soper, *Kuo Jo-hsü's Experiences in Painting* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), 55–56. Also see Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate," 719–20.
 36. Wen C. Fong offers a different interpretation of Emperor Song Taizu's pose. Instead of reading it as stiffly formal, he describes the emperor as a "naturalistically posed warrior king." Fong, "Imperial Portraiture in the Song, Yuan, and Ming Periods," 47. Fong dates the portrait of Song Taizu to the second half of the tenth century, which may ultimately prove to be correct but is not above doubt. The dates of the Song imperial portraits are difficult to prove, although, even if they are copies, they presumably closely follow Song style. Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate," 719, notes that some of the Song dynasty imperial portraits seem to be genuine, while others are probably copies. This opinion seems more convincing than accepting all of the Song portraits. For example, some seemingly unfinished details in *Portrait of Song Taizu* raise questions about the status of this portrait. The chair cover over Taizu's red lacquered throne is outlined in ink and left blank without the application of any pigment or design. Yet in real life, chair covers are invariably highly decorated, which is how they usually appear in paintings. The extreme plainness of this cover intersects an unfinished air to the portrait.
 37. Fong, "Imperial Portraiture," 50
 38. *Ibid.*, 57.
 39. *Ibid.*, 58.
 40. *Ibid.*, 58.
 41. Professor Qianshen Bai was the first scholar to identify the portrait's sitter as Yang Hong.
 42. Marguerite Duras, *The Lover*, trans. Barbara Bray (1984, French edition; reprint, New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 97.
 43. See James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), especially chapter 5, "What Is a Face?," 160–200.
 44. John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance: The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1963*, Bollingen Series 35, no. 12 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 198.
- #### CHAPTER FOUR
1. For terms used to describe ancestor portraits see Qin Lingyun, *Minjian huagong shiliao* (Materials about painting masters in the vernacular tradition) (Beijing: Zhongguo gudian yishu chubanshe, 1958), 27; Shan Guoqiang, "Xiaoxianghua lishi gaishu," 68; and Hornby, "Chinese Ancestral Portraits," 271 (appendix).
 2. Shan Guoqiang, "Xiaoxianghua lishi gaishu," 68.
 3. Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 246.
 4. Louise Wallace Hackney, *Guideposts to Chinese Painting* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), 103–4.
 5. Huang Miaozi, "Cong chuanshen xiaogao shuoqi," 63–64. Also see Chen Chuanxi, "Zhengong shineng yu qita: ji Qing mou Wuxi huajia Xu Jing, Zhu Hengfu" (Realism and more: Notes on Xu Jing and Zhu Hengfu, late-Qing artists from Wuxi), *Jiangsu huakan* 7 (1999): 22–23.
 6. Rigorous review and adjustments are attested to in several works of fiction, including the late-Ming novel *Jinpingmei* (Plum in the golden vase).
 7. See a comment by Juliet Bredon visiting China in 1931 as cited in Kesner, "Memory, Likeness and Identity in Chinese Ancestor Portraits," 8.
 8. Ju-hsi Chou and Claudia Brown, *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting under the Qianlong Emperor (1735–1795)* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1985), 226.
 9. The custom of taking posthumous photographs was practiced in Europe and America as well as China.
 10. Some multigenerational portraits reveal that a practice of prepainting the deceased—face and all—also existed, but presumably such a portrait could not be used in ancestor rituals until after the death of everyone depicted. In one painting, the man's spirit tablet records his name and birth and death dates, while the woman's bears only her birth date, suggesting she was still alive at the time the portrait was composed.
 11. Huang Miaozi, "Cong chuanshen xiaogao shuoqi," 63.
 12. Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton, N.J.: National Gallery of Art and Princeton University Press, 2000).
 13. Zhong Youfang, "Yifu xiaoxianghua de tansheng" (The anniversary of a portrait) in *Zhongguo minjian xiaoxianghua* (Chinese vernacular portraiture), 2 vols. (Taipei: Hansheng zazhi, 1994): vol. 1, 10.
 14. The curators at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, dated their painting to the late eighteenth century, but they were unaware of the existence of other similar portraits with faces rendered in different, later styles.
 15. Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things*, 175.
 16. Hornby, "Chinese Ancestral Portraits," 200.
 17. Craig Clunas uses this phrase in *Art in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 193.
 18. Tsai Wen-t'ing, "The Continuity of Spirit—Ancestral Portraits," in Chinese and English. Trans. Scott Davis. *Guanghua* (Sinorama) (May 1997): 47.
 19. Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong, foreword to *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, ed. Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 1.
 20. Maxwell Hearn, "An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of 'Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden,'" in *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, ed. Smith and Fong, 221–58.
 21. An eighteenth-century painting by Bian Jiu, *Mr. Zhu Worshipping his Ancestors*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrates an example of informal domestic veneration of an ancestor portrait. A son is shown kneeling before a typical ancestor portrait hung in a garden pavilion making an offering. He holds out a pair of scissors placed on a tray. The painting by Bian Jiu is now a hanging scroll, but was originally a leaf in an album illustrating customs of south China, and the purpose of this painting seems to have been to document the southern custom of using scissors as an offering. In some parts of South China scissors are called "liqi," which literally means "sharp instrument." The word for "sharp" puns with a homonym meaning "profit" so the gesture wishes prosperity for the ancestors.
 22. *Korean Portraits from the Collection of the National Museum*, in Korean with English captions (Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 1979), pl. 81.
 23. A double portrait of a husband and wife wearing Ming-style clothing in the Jiangsu Provincial Museum bears an inscription that attests to the common practice of repairing and remounting damaged portrait scrolls. The painting's inscription concludes, "It has been less than thirty years since the picture of the respected ancestors was remounted (*chong biao*) in 1862, but accidentally it has again been subjected to damage. 1884." Published in Nitchū kokkō seijōka nijussūnen kinenten, ed., *Kōso-shō Bijutsukan shozō: Min Shin no sho to kaigai* (Traveling exhibition of the Jiangsu Provincial Museum's collection of Ming and Qing dynasty calligraphy and painting) (Tokyo: Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, 1992), 43. Judging from its style, the

- painting looks like it was recopied as well as remounted.
24. See Stephen Little, "A Memorial Portrait of Zhuang Guan," 62–74.
 25. See Frank Ching, *Ancestors: Nine Hundred Years in the Life of a Chinese Family* (New York: William Morrow, 1988), 320, for an example of a family's project to create portraits of long-departed ancestors. One family member, Qin Zhenjun (1735–1807), "devoted himself to the welfare of the clan [and] searched for and ultimately found all the graves of the ancestors from the Song [dynasty] poet Qin Guan down to their own time [twenty-five generations in total]. . . . Annual sacrificial rites were set up. Portraits of fourteen ancestors were painted."
 26. *Aixin jueo zongpu* (Genealogy of the Aisin Gioro), ed. Jin Songqiao et al. (Fengtian: n.p., 1937–38).
 27. The succession of Princes Yi is documented in *Zongshi wang gong shizhi zhangjing juezhi xici quanbiao* (Charts of hereditary noble titles for imperial mainline princes and nobles), Mou Qiwen, ed., Ms., preface 1907.
 28. Berthold Laufer, "The Development of Ancestral Images on Chinese Altars," in *Kleinere Schriften von Berthold Laufer*, pt. 2, ed. Hartmut Walravens (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), 382ff. Originally published in *Sinologica Coloniensia* 7 (1913).
 29. In a sample of three hundred portraits, most of which were painted during the Qing dynasty, 73 percent present figures wearing Qing dynasty costume, 9 percent present figures in Ming dress, and 17 percent show figures wearing clothing of indeterminate date. Less than 1 percent of the figures appear in Republic-period fashions. See the introduction to this book for a description of this database.
 30. Patricia B. Ebrey, "The Incorporation of Portraits into Chinese Ancestral Rites" (paper for "Dynamics of Changing Rituals," a symposium in Heidelberg, October 1999): 8.
 31. Wang Qi, comp., *Sancai tuhui*, 1513. For an example of a portrait misattributed on the basis of the hat see a painting in the collection of the Harvard University Art Museums that was once called Korean and was subsequently properly reidentified as Chinese.
 32. See Lennart Larsson, Jr., *Carpets from China, Xinjiang, and Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1989) for an introduction to the history of Chinese carpets. Also see Tong Yan, "Gugong cang Qing dai Xinjiang ditan" (Qing dynasty carpets from Xinjiang Province in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing), *Wenwu* 7 (1986): 81–83, and Zhang Hongyuan, "Zhongguo ditan yishu zhong qipa—Xinjiang sirong tan" (Exceptional examples of the art of Chinese carpets—silk, velvet, and fine wool rugs from Xinjiang), *Gugong bowuyuan cangbaolu* (Hong Kong and Shanghai: Sanlian shudian and Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1985), 282.
 33. See Larsson, Jr., *Carpets from China*, 20, pl. 6.
- ## CHAPTER FIVE
1. Evelyn S. Rawski, "Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages" (paper presented at the conference "Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China," organized by Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, Eugene, Oregon, June 1–5, 1998).
 2. Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
 3. For an art-historical analysis of the thangkas depicting the Qianlong emperor as Mañjuśrī see Patricia Berger, "Hyphenated Style: Buddhist Art at the Qianlong Court," n.p., 2000.
 4. Yang Boda, "Shiba shiji Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu dui Qingdai meishu de yingxiang" (The influence of Sino-Western cultural exchange on Qing art in the eighteenth century), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 4 (1998): 70–77.
 5. David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Qing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 24, 30–31; Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 260–63.
 6. D. Seyfort Ruegg, "Mchod yon, yon mchod and mchod gnas/yon gnas: On the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-Social and Religio-Political Concept," in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Geza on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1991), 450.
 7. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, chap. 1.
 8. For information on the Imperial Household Department see Preston M. Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department: A Study of Its Organization and Principal Functions, 1662–1796* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1977).
 9. Empress Xiaoyi, mother of the Jiaqing emperor, was also of bondservant background. Here and elsewhere in the chapter, details concerning imperial personages are obtained from *Aixin jueo zongpu*. Also Tang Bangzhi, *Qing huangshi sipu* (Four genealogies of the Qing imperial family), 2.11b, 2.20ab in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* (Collection of modern Chinese historical materials), vol. 71, ed. Shen Yunlong (Taipei: Wenhai, 1967).
 10. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 76–77.
 11. See H. S. Brunnert and V. V. Hagelstrom, *Present-Day Political Organization of China*, trans. A. Beltchenko and E. E. Moran (Foochow: n.p., 1911), nos. 17–27a. Although Brunnert and Hagelstrom say the color of the button is purple, *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896), "Zongrenfu" (Imperial clan court), 3, stipulates a "red knotted button" hat (*hong jirong dingmao*) in edicts from the Qianlong through the Xianfeng reigns. This hat appears in the portraits of Prince Xun (see figs. 2.3, 2.14) and the informal portrait of Yinxiang (see fig. 2.15) in the Sackler's collection.
 12. On the details of this comparison with the Ming imperial kinsmen see Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 93–94.
 13. See Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
 14. For a discussion of the work of Ding Yizhuang on Manchu-Han Chinese intermarriage see Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 130–31.
 15. Ibid., chap. 1.
 16. Schuyler V. R. Cammann, *China's Dragon Robes* (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), appendices.
 17. Ibid., chaps. 7, 12.
 18. John Vollmer, *In the Presence of the Dragon Throne: Qing Dynasty Costume (1644–1911) in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1977), 31ff, 69–75.
 19. *Huang chao liqi tushi* (Illustrated compendium of Qing rituals), ed. Yinlu et al. (1759; reprinted in *Jing yin Qin zao tang Sikou quanshu huiyao*, vol. 201 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1988), 240–49.
 20. For more information on the court accessories see *Qingdai fushi zhanlan tulu* (Catalogue of the exhibition of Ch'ing costume accessories) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1986).
 21. Henny Harald Hansen, *Mongol Costumes: Researches on the Garments Collected by the First and Second Danish Central Asian Expeditions under the Leadership of Henning Haslund-Christensen, 1936–37 and 1938–39* (Copenhagen: I kommission hos Gyldendal, 1950).
 22. Ou Chaogui, "Budala gong zang Ming Chengzu Zhu Di huaxiang" (The portrait of Zhu Di, Ming Chengzu, in the Potlala), *Wenwu* 11 (1985): 65; on the general historical context see Elliot Sperling, "Early Ming Policy toward Tibet: An Examination of the Proposition that the Early Ming Emperors Adopted a 'Divide and Rule' Policy toward Tibet," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University at Bloomington, 1983.
 23. Cited in Lin Jing, "Lasa lansheng" (Sights of Lhasa), *Zijinzheng* 65 (1991): 26; Victor Chan, *Tibet Handbook: A Pilgrimage Guide* (Chico, Calif.: Moon Publications, 1994), 106–7.
 24. David Kidd, "Ritual and Realism in Palace Portraiture: A Distinguished Seventeenth-Century Chinese Portrait," *Oriental Art* 19, no. 4 (1973): 423.
 25. Information on the shrines is presented in *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896), juan 426, 448–54. Board of Rites 137, 159–65. There is a detailed description of the Temple of the Ancestors in L. C. Arlington and W. Lewisohn, *In*

- Search of Old Peking* (1935; reprint, New York: Paragon, 1967), 62–69.
26. Kong Youde was one of the most prominent examples of individuals who joined the Qing cause and became a major military leader in the conquest of the Ming territories. His biography is in Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, vol. 1, 435–36.
 27. *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896), juan 453, Board of Rites 164. We thank Susan Naquin for sharing information on these shrines before publication of her book, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900*.
 28. *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896), juan 448–54.
 29. Ka Bo Tsang, “Portraits of the Meritorious Officials,” 69–88.
 30. Hartmut Walravens, “Portraits of Meritorious Officers, Accompanied by Manchu Elegies,” in *Altaica Berolinensia: The Concept of Sovereignty in the Altaic World*, ed. Barbara Kellner-Heinkele (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 307–31. The same portraits are mentioned in Nie Chongzheng, “Xi Bolin guan Qing gongting hua ji” (Notes on the Qing court paintings exhibited in West Berlin), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 3 (1986): 63–64.
- ## CHAPTER SIX
1. Translation by Stephen D. Allee. For other details of Yinghe’s life, see appendix 2.
 2. Translation by Stephen D. Allee.
 3. Translation by Stephen D. Allee. See appendix 2 for a biography of Yinli.
 4. Translation by Stephen D. Allee. For the full text of both inscriptions, see appendix 2.
 5. See Wan Yi et al., comps. *Daily Life in the Forbidden City: The Qing Dynasty 1644–1912*, trans. Rosemary Scott and Erica Shipley (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1988), 184, pl. 257.
 6. Myron Cohen, “Lineage Organization in North China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (1990): 509–34.
 7. Archives 446-5-55/80, memorial from Prince Zhuang dated December 30, 1750, when converted to the Western calendar.
 8. Personal communication from Peter Bol. The Cheng lineage home was in Yongkang County, Zhejiang Province. Cantonese lineage members whom James L. Watson has interviewed in the New Territories, Hong Kong, also own ancestor portraits; though the paintings are rarely inscribed with the names of the subjects, local people always say they know the specific identities of the individuals in them. We thank professors Bol and Watson for their communications.
 9. Wan Yi et al., comps. *Daily Life in the Forbidden City*, 26, pl. 18, and 307, pl. 479.
 10. See, for example, a painting by Castiglione of the middle-aged emperor on horseback, reproduced as pl. 53 in Zhu Jiajin et al., comps. *Treasures of the Forbidden City* (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1986), 149, 150, detail, and in *Qingdai di hou xiang* (Portraits of Qing emperors and empresses), vol. 2 (Peking: Beiping gugong bowuyuan, 1931), pl. 26.
 11. On names, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 99–103. Wilkinson notes, “It was taboo to refer to a dead person by his name.” On the custom of conferring posthumous names among commoners see J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China: Its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect, Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected therewith*, vol. 1 (Leyden, 1892–1910; reprint, Taipei: Chengwen, 1969), 175.
 12. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 39, 114–17.
 13. Evelyn S. Rawski, “The Imperial Way of Death: Ming and Ch’ing Emperors and Death Ritual,” in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, eds. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 243–44.
 14. Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 106–7.
 15. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, chap. 4.
 16. Rubie S. Watson, “The Named and the Nameless: Gender and Person in Chinese Society,” in *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Caroline B. Brettel and Carolyn F. Sargent (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993), 120–33.
 17. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 144–56.
 18. Unless otherwise noted, the information on succession presented here is taken from Rawski, *Last Emperors*, chap. 3.
 19. Silas H. Wu, *Passage to Power: K’ang-hsi and His Heir Apparent, 1661–1722* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).
 20. See Yinti’s biography in Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period*, vol. 2, 930.
 21. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 77.
 22. Yang Xuechen and Zhou Yuanlian, *Qingdai baqi wang gong guizu xing shuai shi* (The rise and fall of the Qing banner nobility) (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1986), 242–50.
 23. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 106.
 24. Gaozong Chun huangdi shilu (Veritable records of Emperor Gaozong), Qianlong 43/3/2 (March 29, 1778), in *Qing shilu* (Veritable records of the Qing dynasty) vol. 22 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 57–58.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 80.
 27. Ibid., 70–71. On Qing-Mongol relations during this period see James Millward, Ruth Dunnell et al., eds. *A Realm in Microcosm: The Manchu Retreat at Chengde, Tibetan Buddhism and the High Qing Empire* (n.p.). The authors thank James Millward for sharing parts of the manuscript before publication.
- ## CHAPTER SEVEN
1. See Chen Shen et al., *Zhongguo sheyingshi, 1840–1937* (History of Chinese photography, 1840–1937) (Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 1990), chap. 2, and Régine Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor’s European Palaces* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1998).
 2. Discussion of the technical processes can be found in Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens*, 27–30.
 3. Chen Shen, *Zhongguo sheyingshi*, 50–51.
 4. Ibid., 63–65. According to one foreign account, Prince Gong had not been nearly so positive about photography in his first encounter. Sitting for Beato, he was described as being “in a state of terror, pale as death.” See Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens*, 3.
 5. A. Forke, “Die Pekingener Laden und ihre Abzeichen,” (Shops and shop signs in Peking), *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 8, no. 4 (1899): 10. We thank Susan Naquin for the reference and Dieter Von Oettingen for translating the text.
 6. Clark Worswick, “Photography in Imperial China,” in Clark Worswick and Jonathan Spence, *Imperial China: Photographs 1850–1912* (New York: Pennwick/Crown Books, 1978), 142.
 7. Régine Thiriez brought this to the attention of the authors.
 8. Personal communication.
 9. Like photographers, some Western painters working in China, who aimed at lifelike realism in their work, were confounded by a Chinese expectation that details should be manipulated by the artist to highlight symbols of status. An entry in the *North China Herald* (Shanghai), 13 July 1878, 44, describes the trials of painter Walter Goodman. He had a commission to paint a Chinese ambassador who wanted a frontally posed portrait, but he also wanted the buttons of rank he wore on the back of his cap to show. The painter said it was not possible, so the ambassador buried his head in his lap and instructed Goodman to paint him in this way. Goodman despaired and finally arrived at the solution of moving the buttons to the sitter’s shoulder. Thanks to Roberta Wue for this reference.
 10. Shoes for bound feet are visible in a portrait of an unidentified woman, now in the Art Museum, Princeton University, which is executed in a Ming style (accession number

46–168). The woman's tiny, pointed slippers are propped up on a foot-stool. This gesture was common in erotic art, but otherwise the style of the painting resembles an ancestor portrait. It is possible the feet were added after the creation of the portrait, to attract a foreign buyer, since many Westerners were fascinated by bound feet. Another possibility is that despite the Ming-style clothing, the portrait was executed in the twentieth century based on a photographic model. The background of the painting supports this interpretation because the area behind the woman is painted with a colorful, geometric design, as if a patterned brocade cloth hangs on the wall behind her. Fabric backdrops were commonly used in early photography studios.

11. For descriptions of reasons people take photographs to a painting studio to have a new portrait created see Zhong Youfang, "Yifu xiaoxianghua de tansheng," and Xi Song, "Yi bi hua shi" (The one brush painting studio), in *Zhongguo minjian xiaoxianghua*, vol. 1 (Chinese vernacular portraiture) (Taipei: Hansheng zazhi, 1994), 1–38, 39–50.
12. It was not only Europeans who were impressed by the style of Chinese commemorative images. The Thai prince Chulalongkorn commissioned a portrait of himself seated in the iconic pose and wearing Chinese robes sometime between 1851 and 1868. His face is slightly turned, as seen in some Chinese portraits after the advent of photography. The portrait is in the collection of the Wehart Chamrun Mansion, Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayudhya, Thailand. See Apinan Poshyananda, "Portraits of Modernity in the Royal Thai Court," *Asian Art and Culture* 8, no. 1 (winter 1995): 38ff; 41, fig. 4.
13. See the image of Supercargo Jochim Severin Bonsach in Canton, 1731, published in Bente Dam-Mikkelsen and Torben Lundbaek, eds., *Etnografiske genstande i det kongelige danske Kunstkammer: 1650–1800* (Ethnographic objects in the royal Danish kunstkammer: 1650–1800), Nationalmuseets skrifter, Etnografisk række, vol. 17, (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1980), 179–78. We thank Kee Il Choi, Jr., for this reference.
14. Keith G. Stevens, "Soul Images and Gods of the Boat People," *Arts of Asia* 7, no. 6 (1977): 52–61.
15. See two portraits in the collection of the Národní Galerie, Prague, Czech Republic (VM2402 1171/157 and VM3217 1171/387).
16. See Kay E. Black, "The Puzzling Portrait," *Orientations* 25, no. 4 (April 1994): 68–70.
17. For examples of Chuck Close's work see Robert Storr et al., *Chuck Close* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998).

Appendix 1

Other Chinese Portraits in the Collection of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

This appendix illustrates most of the Chinese portraits in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery originally belonging to Richard G. Pritzlaff that do not appear elsewhere in the book.

The identifications of the sitters are based on title slips, in Chinese or English, found on the paintings themselves or on notes supplied by Pritzlaff. The English-language title slips were written by Pritzlaff. Information from Chinese-language title slips has been summarized in English. These traditional identifications may not necessarily be accurate. Following the general practice in this book, many portraits are dated to a fairly broad time span.

The paintings appear here generally in the arbitrary numerical order in which they were accessioned into the museum. Some exceptions include paintings later identified as belonging to a husband-wife pair, which have been placed together out of accession-number sequence.

All these paintings bear the following credit line: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program and partial gift of Richard G. Pritzlaff. Photography is by Neil Greentree, Robert Harrell, and John Tsantes; black-and-white prints are courtesy of Michael Bryant.

1 Hongyan, Prince Guo (1733–1765), in a Garden. English label, “Hong chan in a garden.” Mid–18th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 162.7 x 107.7 cm. s1991.48

This is the second portrait of Hongyan in the collection (see fig. 5.4 and biography in appendix 2). Here he appears younger and leaner than in the other portrait, where his fleshy face attests to intervening years of indulgence. In his lifetime, Hongyan was criticized as a greedy person.

2 Dodo, Prince Yu (1614–1649) English label, “Toto.” 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 181.2 x 113.7 cm. s1991.54

A *qilin* badge is overpainted on top of a dragon design on the wearer’s robe.

3 Dodo, Prince Yu (1614–1649). Chinese label, “Great Royal Uncle, Prince Yu. Repaired in 1905.” Late 19th–20th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper; image only, 186.7 x 119.0 cm. s1991.55

This man does not appear to be the same person as in appendix 1 fig. 2 (s1991.54). The painting seems suspiciously modern and may have been produced merely for commercial sale as a decorative item.

4 Wife of Dodo, Prince Yu (1614–1649). English label, “Wife of Toto.” 19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 179.2 x 96.7 cm. s1991.56

This image is not part of a pair with either of the portraits identified as Dodo in the Sackler’s collection (see appendix 1 figs. 2, 3).

5 Ser Er Chen. Identification by Pritzlaff. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 191.7 x 98.0 cm. s1991.57

Though a name for the sitter is given, it has not been possible to identify anyone in the Qing court who used a similar name.

6 Wife of Ser Er Chen. Identification by Pritzlaff. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 109.9 x 100.0 cm. s1991.58

This portrait and the one of Ser Er Chen (appendix 1 fig. 5) have different dimensions and the carpets in the two paintings do not match, suggesting they were not created as a pair. The identical chairs and chair covers might be explained by production in the same workshop.

7 Consort of the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1662–1722). English label, “Kang Hsi’s Fei.” 19th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 149.2 x 96.9 cm. s1991.59

Though the Kangxi emperor had forty consorts who attained the rank of *fei*, the modest dress of this woman makes it seem unlikely that she was a member of the imperial harem.

8 Tsereng (d. 1750). English label, “Russia, Kang Hsi’s son-in-law.” According to Pritzlaff’s notes, “Ts’e Ling—descendant of Chengis Khan.” Late 19th–20th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; image only, 144 x 83 cm. s1991.62

Married to one of the daughters of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), Tsereng concluded a border treaty between the Qing empire and Russia. The tilt of his hat is inexplicable; the exceedingly long feet are also anomalous. Many sketch lines, such as one for a peacock feather near the cap, are visible. This portrait may have been a rejected sketch.

9 Lady Hejia, Second Wife of Prince Hongming (1705–1767). Chinese label, "Portrait of Lady Hejia, princess of Gong Qin [Hongming]." Pritzlaff wrote something different in his notes and identified her as "wife of Jizhi" (unidentified). 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper; image only, 175.7 x 85.6 cm. s1991.65

According to the label, the sitter is the second wife of Prince Hongming (see fig. 3), but if so, this scroll was painted at a different time than was his. The identification could certainly be incorrect. The woman wears a surcoat suitable for court dress, but it is paired with a plain, albeit elegantly fashionable, kingfisher-feather headdress that would not have been appropriate for court attire.

10 Yinsi, Prince Lian (1681–1726). English label, "Kang-hsi's 8th son, born 1681." Late 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 165.2 x 88.0 cm. s1991.66

Yinsi was formally cut off from the imperial clan and imprisoned. In 1778, the emperor posthumously restored Yinsi to membership in the imperial clan and extended his rights to his descendants.

11 Empress. Identification by Pritzlaff. Chinese label, abraded except for the word "repaired." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 204.1 x 156.2 cm. s1991.75

Except for the face, this painting closely resembles another scroll in the collection, but this portrait is of superior quality. The attribution of this portrait as an empress has so far proved impossible to substantiate, but it is an exceptionally grand image with an ornate mounting. Comparison of the settings in all the scrolls suggest that this work may have been executed in the same workshop as appendix 1 figs. 13 and 15; also see fig. 6.4.

12 Lady-in-Waiting to the Emperor. Identification by Pritzlaff. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 188.9 x 98.4 cm. s1991.76

13 Daišan, Prince Li (1583–1648). Identification based on Pritzlaff's notes and similarity to fig. 6.4. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 264.9 x 158.7 cm. s1991.79

Stylistically, this portrait of Daišan as a young man would seem to have been executed around the same time as the other portrait of him in the Sackler's collection (see fig. 6.4), but in that painting he is depicted as an older man. The portraits were produced by the same workshop. It is possible that this could be his son.

14 Woman with Phoenix Headdress. English label, "Ming lady." 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 182.4 x 119.0 cm. s1991.85

This portrait depicts a woman in Qing dress, contradicting the label. Some aspects of the portrait are modest, suggesting that the sitter's court dress might have been a painter's prop used to create an air of grandeur for a commoner.

15 Yongzheng's Mother. English label, "Yung Cheng's mother." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 211.3 x 148.2 cm. s1991.89

See description for appendix 1 fig. 11 for more about related portraits in the collection. This portrait was executed with less-costly materials than the above-mentioned work, and therefore, the identification as an imperial mother seems suspect.

16 Lady Shi (d. 1718), **Wife of Yinreng.** English label, "Kang Hsi's daughter-in-law." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 163.9 x 115.6 cm. s1991.91

This portrait is one of a pair with appendix 1 fig. 17. It is not clear why the woman wears four pierced earrings in each ear; the Manchu custom was to wear three.

17 Yinreng (1674–1725) as Heir Apparent. English label, “Kang Hsi’s second son Heir Apparent.” Chinese label, “east.” 18th–9th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 164.2 x 115.6 cm. S1991.109

Yinreng was declared heir apparent in 1676 but fell out of favor and died in confinement in 1725. The rather spectacular chair depicted in this scroll resembles a throne in the Palace Museum, Beijing, made for the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), Yinreng’s father. The word “east” on the Chinese label might indicate that the scroll should hang on the east wall of the portrait hall. It would also have been hung to the east of the portrait of his wife.

18 Nurgachi’s Wife. English label, “Nurhachi’s Wife, Tai Tsung’s Queen Dowager.” 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 176.6 x 102.8 cm. S1991.92

The identification of this portrait is uncertain since the sitter supposedly died at age twenty-nine, but the creased and heavily pockmarked face here

suggests someone older. Moreover, the surcoat has been heavily altered. X-rays reveal that the surcoat was originally decorated with a subtle pattern; this awkward dragon pattern was no doubt added to please a foreign customer. The original portrait would have been overly plain for a portrait of an empress.

19 Yintang (1683–1726). English label, “Yun Tang, 9th son.” 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 171.4 x 75.6 cm. S1991.94

Yintang was the ninth son of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722). The sitter’s gesture of grasping one arm of the chair as if he is about to rise from his seat is highly unconventional.

20 Man with Peacock Feather. English label, “man with peacock, think Ko Hsi.” 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 158.2 x 95.0 cm. S1991.96

The painting is greatly damaged and the decoration on the robe is awkward, perhaps as a result of overpainting.

21 Mongol Princess in Court Dress. Identification by Pritzlaff. 18–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 189.6 x 104.7 cm. S1991.97

22 Yinzhi, Prince Cheng (1677–1732). Identification provided by Pritzlaff. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 185.7 x 151.3 cm. S1991.100

Yinzhi was a son of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), and his career was marked by a series of promotions and demotions. He died out of favor. The emblem on the sitter’s chest seems to have been altered. It looks like a roundel, but traces of a square outline are still visible. This painting was mounted with borders of exceptionally luxurious silk.

23 Li Yinzu (act. 1648–60). English label, “Li Ying-tsu.” 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 124.2 x 63.7 cm. S1991.103

This is the second portrait of Li Yinzu in the Sackler’s collection (see fig. 6.9). In this painting he wears a large rank badge that covers his whole chest, a style that was popular in the seventeenth century. The angle of the chair is unconventional and suggests that this painting was not made as a memorial portrait.

24 Courtier. 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 170.3 x 82.3 cm. S1991.105

This portrait is one of a pair with an image of his wife (see appendix 1 fig. 25).

25 Empress Dowager. 19th century. Identification provided by Pritzlaff. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 169 x 83 cm. s1991.117
The elaborate carpet is decorated with symbols of longevity, including cranes, peaches, and sprigs of the sacred fungus (*lingzhi*).

27 Man with Fur-trimmed Robe and Peacock Feather. English label, "Old man peacock feather." 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 151.5 x 88.1 cm. s1991.107
This painting has undergone previous repair, and part of the background is replaced with a silk patch.

29 Courtier. Attached label card in English, "Manchu first class military official with fat, roundish face . . . in sable gown. . . . Holds rank of Viscount. Portrait painted about 1700." (The date 1700 is crossed out with 1900 written over it.) Late 19th–early 20th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 190.1 x 104.5 cm. s1991.110

31 Dorgon, Prince Rui (1612–1650). English label, "Silk portrait of Dorgun in bearskin gown." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 202.9 x 98.5 cm. s1991.112
Dorgon was a leader in the conquest generation, and when the Qing dynasty was established, he was made a prince of the first degree. His title was Prince Rui, which was later given to Chunying (1761–1800), whose portrait appears in fig. 6.2. Dorgon was posthumously stripped of his honors, but in 1778 his rank was restored and he was honored in the Imperial Ancestor Temple. If the identification of Dorgon is accurate, this portrait cannot date from earlier than 1778.

26 The Seventeenth Brother of the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820). English and Chinese labels to this effect. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 189.6 x 102.1 cm. s1991.106

28 Courtier. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 198.5 x 141.6 cm. s1991.108
This painting appears to be from the same workshop as the portrait of Oboi (see fig. 4.3).

30 Courtier. English label, "summer hat." 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 195.6 x 101.0 cm. s1991.111
The shape of this man's face corresponds perfectly with one of the ten standard facial types found in physiognomy books. The shape is called *feng* after the Chinese character for "wind," which is written as an open-sided trapezoid—narrow at the top and wide at the base, like the relative proportions of this man's forehead and chin.

32 Zhenggong Yuan Fei, Wife of Dorgon (d. 1650). 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 200.9 x 98.5 cm. s1991.113
See the image of her husband, appendix 1 figure 31.

33 Cuyeng (1580–1615), Nurgaci's Eldest Son. English label, "Nurhachis [*sic*] son, Henry VIII." According to Pritzlaff's notes, "Nurhachi's eldest son." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 184.3 x 98.8 cm. S1991.114

Pritzlaff whimsically likened the subject of this portrait to King Henry VIII.

34 Wife of Cuyeng. 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 184.4 x 98.8 cm. S1991.115

35 Yin'e, Prince Dun (1683–1741). English label, "Kang Hsi's 10th son." 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 163.4 x 99.4 cm. S1991.116

Yin'e, a second-degree prince and one of the sons of Kangxi (reigned 1662–1722), supported the losing faction in the succession for the throne after his father's death. He was stripped of his princely title and held in confinement for the rest of his life. When his nephew came to the throne, some privileges were restored and Yin'e was granted the burial rites of a fourth-degree prince.

36 Korean King. Identification by Pritzlaff. 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 168.8 x 88.0 cm. S1991.118

This painting has several anomalous features, including the floor covering and the costume. The typical Qing capelet looks like an afterthought here and the talismanic character on the wearer's robe is highly unusual. In addition, the atypical floor covering resembles a woven mat more than a carpet. This last feature may have led Pritzlaff to think the sitter was Korean.

37 Lady Yunlin. Identification by Pritzlaff. Late 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 161.2 x 94.9 cm. S1991.119

38 Shi Wenying (1655–after 1718). Superscription in Chinese reads in part, "Lieutenant-general with two additional grades, Shi Wenying[']s] . . . portrait . . . in his sixty-second year." 18th century, or later. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 210.9 x 113.7 cm. S1991.120

The Sackler's collection includes a portrait of his second wife, Lady Guan (see fig. 2.1), and the translation of the superscription over her portrait appears in appendix 2. The two portraits were made as a pair. Both this portrait and that of Lady Guan came to the Sackler in poor condition, though the latter has been conserved and remounted at the museum.

39 Daughter of the Daoguang Emperor (r. 1821–50). English label, "Tao Kuang's 5th daughter." Late 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 188.6 x 102.1 cm. S1991.122

The setting in this portrait is similar to that in appendix 1 figure 44, which is a portrait labeled as Daoguang's son-in-law. The paintings are similar sizes but not identical, so it is unclear whether they constitute a pair.

40 Son of the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1662–1722) in Daoist robes.

Identification by Pritzlaff. 18th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 93.0 x 57.1 cm. S1991.123

This painting belongs to a tradition of "mind images." Qing rulers and members of the social elite were fond of having themselves shown wearing clothing and with attributes that depicted them in roles different from those they actually played in society. Emperors and members of the imperial family had themselves portrayed as Daoist priests, Buddhist bodhisattvas, warriors, and farmers.

41 **Courtier.** 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 188.7 x 98.5 cm. S1991.125

42 **Duke.** English label, “earl”; partially effaced Chinese label contains a word usually translated as “duke.” 19th–early 20th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 186.6 x 101.6 cm. S1991.127

The sitter has six fingers on his right hand. Another unusual feature is the wavy silhouette of the court necklace as it hangs over his chest.

43 **Figure in Military Attire.** 17th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 170.5 x 126.9 cm. S1991.132

44 **Son-in-law of the Daoguang Emperor** (r. 1821–50), Possibly **Jing Shou** (d. 1889). Combined English and Chinese label, “Tao Kuang’s son in law.” Late 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 184.9 x 100.5 cm. S1991.135
See comments for appendix 1 figure 39.

45 **Empress Xiaozhuang** (1613–1688). English label, “Silk portrait of Shun Chih’s mother.” 18th–19th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 167.8 x 94.6 cm. S1991.141

The physical features of this woman resemble those recorded in portraits of this empress in Chinese collections. Only the right half of the couch the woman sits on is visible, suggesting that this is only half of a once larger painting that also included her husband, Hongtaiji (1592–1643). His portrait appears in figure 5.1.

46 **Yinxi** (1711–1758), **The Twenty-first Son of the Kangxi Emperor** (r. 1662–1722). English label, “Kang Hsi’s 21st son.” Ca. 1757, which is the date of the inscription signed by Yinxi using his sobriquet (*hao*), Shunan. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; image only, 102.3 x 97.1 cm. S1991.101

It was a common convention in Qing times for a man to have his portrait showing him seated on a rock in a natural setting. The conceit behind this type of painting is based on the notion that a superior man knows how to enjoy the trees and streams. However, judging from Yinxi’s stiff pose and the stilted appearance of the servant, this painting does not record the sitter at ease in nature. Rather, the painter filled in the background as a device to allude to Yinxi’s character. Several other of Kangxi’s sons, including Prince Guo, who is included in the Sackler’s collection (see appendix 1 figure 1), also had themselves painted in a similar setting.

Appendix 2

Selected Biographies

Many of the subjects of the portraits in the Sackler's collection were important historical figures. This alphabetized selection of twenty-six brief biographies is intended to provide some information about those individuals and point the interested reader to sources for further reading.

Translations are by Stephen D. Allee unless otherwise noted. A key to abbreviations for sources can be found at the end of this appendix.

Boggodo, Prince Zhuang (1650–1723).

See figure 2.2

Boggodo was the eldest son of Prince Šose and hence a grandson of Hongtaiji (see Taizong, below). Born to Šose's first wife in 1650, Boggodo inherited his father's first-degree principedom in 1655.

His father's title, Chengze, was altered to Zhuang when Boggodo succeeded to the principedom. This was one of the great princely houses, receiving revenues from a large estate created during the conquest period. Boggodo seems to have eschewed an active official career. He died in 1723, in the first months of the Yongzheng reign, at age seventy-four by Chinese reckoning. Since Boggodo had no sons of his own, the emperor's brother Yinlu (1695–1767) was designated the heir to the wealthy principedom. Sources: ECCP, 219, 925; AJZP, 1942–43.

Chunying, Prince Rui (1761–1800). See figure 6.2.

In February 1778 the Qianlong emperor restored the first-degree principedom, abolished in 1651, that had been held by Dorgon (1612–1650). Dorgon had no sons of his own, so he adopted as his heir his nephew Dorbo, the fifth son of Dorgon's

younger brother Dodo. When the title was restored, it went to Chunying, the fourth-generation descendant of Dorbo. Chunying was the third and eldest surviving son of Rusong (1737–1770), who filled a succession of banner and central government posts in the course of his career. At the age of fourteen, even before receiving princely elevation, Chunying gained the privilege of entering the Qianqing gate into the inner court of the palace. His career after 1778 was long, occupied primarily by service in banner positions, the Imperial Clan Court, and the Imperial Genealogical Office. The court conferred on him the posthumous name Gong (Reverent) after his death. The principedom passed to his eldest son, Bao'en, and after Bao'en's death only a year later, to his fourth son, Rui'en.

Sources: ECCP, 218; AJZP, 5873–74.

The inscription written on gold-flecked paper mounted above the portrait of Chunying is by Yongxing, Prince Cheng (1752–1823), a noted calligrapher who was the eleventh son of the Qianlong emperor. The text reads "In the first year of the Jiaqing reign, middle month of

spring [March 9 – April 7, 1795], respectfully presented to Prince Rui: Eminent Paragon of Loyalty and Beneficence. Inscribed by Prince Cheng.” The seal bears Prince Cheng’s studio name, Yijinzhai.

On the right side of the portrait, written on the mounting, is a colophon by Tiebao (1752 – 1824), a Manchu official known as a man of letters and a famous calligrapher. The poem combines twelve lines from the Confucian *Book of History* (Shujing):

In this He is Our Sovereign indeed,
Using the occasion to increase family affection;
Greatly he displays the record of merits,
His bright virtue is a penetrating fragrance.
Your forebears had accomplishments and merits,
And transmitted a good example to posterity;
Reverently and carefully you fulfill your filial duties,
Generations of your line show loyalty and probity.
Do not disregard the statutes you should revere,
Whether in military affairs or in civil matters;
Encourage others through the Five Virtues,
So shall you be a help to Us, the One Man.

On the left side of the portrait, written on the mounting, is another colophon, written by Liu Yong (1720 – 1805), a Qing official who was one of the most influential calligraphers of his time. The poem plays on passages from Confucian texts:

It is the emperor who bestows his command,
It is the prince who receives his favor;
Of excellent renown, an excellent role model,
He serves as a screen and acts as a hedge.
He straightens his robes and his cap,
Shows reverence in his look and gaze;
His virtue completely corresponds,
As a deep tarn, as an alpine peak;
As the Ruo-tree separates its flowers,
Or the Milky Way overflows its branches,
His radiance covers, his favor flows,
And blessings descend to numerous generations.
This portrait is painted as a mirror of oneself,
Demeanor respectful and heart reverent,
The emperor’s countenance within a few feet,
He bestows His Grace on his virtuous kin.

Daišan, the first Prince Li (1583–1648). See figure 6.4.

The second son of Nurgaci, the founder of the Qing dynasty, Daišan was a conquest hero, famous for his generalship and the progenitor of one of the most illustrious princely lines in the Qing imperial lineage. Daišan had been active in battle from 1607, and when his father died (1626) he was one of the four senior banner princes to whom Nurgaci entrusted the management of governmental affairs. He played a major role in the rise of his younger half-brother Hongtaiji to the headship, succeeding Nurgaci, and in return Hongtaiji granted Daišan the principedom. Daišan also played an important role in settling the succession quarrel that ensued after Hongtaiji died (1643). The leading contenders were one of Daišan’s half-brothers, Dorgon, and Hongtaiji’s eldest son, Hooge. Daišan influenced the compromise choice of Hongtaiji’s son Fulin as the Shunzhi emperor.

Many of Daišan’s eight sons were also extremely prominent in the Qing conquest of China and won princely titles in their own right. The Qianlong emperor regarded Daišan as the personification of the virtues of the conquest generation of imperial kinsmen and had his tablet installed (1754) in the Temple of Princes in Mukden and in the Temple of the Ancestors in Peking (1778). The original title of Daišan’s principedom, Li, was also restored and the principedom was awarded the privilege of perpetual inheritance.

Sources: ECCP, 214; BQTZ 3: 1422 – 26.

Guan, Lady. See figure 2.1.
According to the inscription, this is a portrait of Lady Guan, the second wife of Shi Wenying (1655 – after 1718), who was granted the honorary title dame-consort of the first rank on September 4, 1697. Shi was a lieutenant general of the Chinese Plain White Banner who had earlier served in the imperial guards. According to the *Baqi tongzhi* (BQTZ 4:2792), Shi occupied the post of lieutenant general from 1695 to 1718. The portrait is dated April 22, 1716.

The inscription above the portrait reproduces the text of a 1697 imperial patent promoting Lady Guan to the title dame-consort of the first rank. The text then continues:

Portrait of old Lady Guan, wife of Lord Shi, Lieutenant General of the Chinese Plain White Banner, who was first

appointed Imperial Guardsman third class, second appointed Lieutenant General, third appointed to one additional grade, and fourth appointed to two additional grades. Respectfully inscribed in the Kangxi reign on the first day of the intercalary third lunar month in the *bingshen* year of the sexagenary cycle [April 22, 1716].

Guanglu, Prince Yu (1706 – 1785). See figure 6.3.
Guanglu inherited the first-degree princely title of his ancestor Fuquan (1653 – 1703). The second son of the Shunzhi emperor (reigned 1644 – 61), Fuquan had disgraced himself in the 1690 campaign against the Zunghar Mongol leader Galdan. Fuquan’s successor, Baotai, was stripped of his rank in 1724 by the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723 – 35), who accused him of complicity in the factional intrigues of Yinsi. Guangning, Baotai’s brother’s son, then received the principedom, but he held it for only two years. In 1726 it was awarded to Guanglu. Guanglu held a number of posts in the banners, the Imperial Genealogical Office, and the Imperial Clan Court. He also sat briefly on the Deliberative Council of Ministers and Princes, the highest decision-making body in the Qing government before the advent of the Grand Council. After Guanglu’s death, the title was successively reduced in rank.

The inscription, contributed by the Qianlong emperor (see translation below), alludes to Guanglu’s skill in archery and pursuit of the hunt, Manchu virtues that the emperor endeavored to perpetuate among the conquest elite. Although Guanglu did not have a particularly outstanding career, he succeeded in avoiding the quagmire of court politics that led to the disgrace of many of his fellow kinsmen.
Sources: ECCP, 252; AIZP, 1322 – 23.

The inscription that appears above the portrait:

Poem Presented by the Emperor to Imperial Prince Yu with Best Wishes for Long Life on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday
Recalling how few share with Us the same great-grandfather,
As old age comes, others of old age become more dear.
Your springs-and-autumns are exactly more than Ours by five,
May good fortune and longevity attend your eightieth birthday.

Your archery, elder brother, now yields to your sinews’ strength,
Though We can still exert the energy for the springtime hunt.
Stay seated to receive the obeisance of Our son and grandsons,
That praise of Our celestial family may last ten-thousand springs.

In the fiftieth year of the Qianlong reign, the *yisi* year, on the twenty-seventh day of the sixth lunar month [August 1, 1785], was the grand celebration of the eightieth birthday of the prince, my deceased father. On that day he received a hanging scroll with this poem by the Emperor, who also commanded that [His imperial] son and grandsons should come bearing robes and jade and bringing goblets and viands, and commanding that the prince, my deceased father, should stay seated to receive their obeisances, which is truly among the most extraordinary honors ever bestowed. Respectfully written above the court portrait of the prince, my deceased father, that it may be recorded and never perish.

The original poem seems to have been transcribed onto the portrait. One character has been altered from the version that is included in the emperor’s collected works. The inscription lacks a seal and is not signed.

Hongli, the Qianlong emperor (1711–1799). See figures 5.2, 5.5.
The Qing dynasty had two great emperors. The first was the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662 – 1722), who ruled during the crucial decades after the completion of the Qing conquest, and the second was the Kangxi emperor’s grandson Hongli, who presided over the empire at its peak. During Hongli’s reign, Qing troops completed the subjugation of the Western Mongols and incorporated the present-day region of Xinjiang. The Qianlong emperor ruled over a territory that was greater than the current People’s Republic of China. Qing prosperity stemmed in large part from trade with Europe. The eighteenth century saw an increasing demand by Europeans for Chinese tea, porcelain, silk, and other products. The Qing enjoyed a favorable trade balance with Europe; foreign silver flowed into Qing ports, buoying the money supply and enabling it to keep pace with changes brought about by population growth, expanded output, and accelerated commercialization.
Hongli was a favorite of the Kangxi emperor, whose rule he emulated. Hongli

is the only Qing emperor to have abdicated the throne, doing so in 1796 in order not to exceed the sixty-one-year tenure of his grandfather. His reign was notable not only for territorial expansion and economic prosperity but also for the flourishing of the arts. Art historians generally excoriate him as a defacer of the masterpieces of painting that he collected and stamped with his seals, but he should also be recognized as the architect of the Peking known to foreigners in the early twentieth century as a magnificent capital city. The emperor renovated the city walls, roads, and temples. He built elaborate gardens in the imperial villas, which astonished European visitors, and was a discriminating connoisseur who supervised the creation of many objets d'art in the palace workshops. The exquisite refinement of the porcelain, cloisonné, and other objects made during his reign are testimonies to his cosmopolitan taste.

For the Qianlong emperor, connoisseurship was itself a politically charged activity. He enunciated a rhetoric of rulership that drew on Inner Asian concepts of universal monarchy. Instead of aspiring to convert the newly subjugated non-Han peoples of the Inner Asian periphery to Confucian values and Han Chinese customs, the Qianlong emperor espoused a multicultural approach. He was the protector of the various languages, religions, and cultures of his major subjects. Retrospectively vilified for the political censorship that accompanied the compilation and editing of the greatest Chinese works, the *Siku quanshu* [Complete library of the four treasures], the Qianlong emperor should also be known for his large-scale multilingual projects. He commissioned trilingual and quadrilingual dictionaries, Mongol and Manchu translations of the Tibetan *Tripitaka* [the Tibetan Buddhist canon], and the massive geography of the western regions known as *Xiyu tongwenzhi*. The Qianlong emperor himself was a polyglot [he spoke Chinese, Manchu, and Mongolian and studied Tibetan and Uighur] and followed Tibetan Buddhism in his private life. Sources: ECCP, 369–73; Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pt. 3; Sun Wenliang, Zheng Chuanshui, and Zhang Jie, *Qianlong di* (The Qianlong emperor). Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1993.

Hongming, Gong Qin beile (1705–1767).

See figure 3.

Hongming was the second son of Yinti, himself the fourteenth son of the Kangxi emperor (see the biography of Yinti below). Yinti's princely title, restored by his nephew, was inherited by Yinti's first son, Hongchun (1703–1739), so Hongming's rank was not one inherited from his ancestors.

Born on April 25, 1705, to the wife of Yinti (née Wanyan, daughter of Vice-Minister Luocha), Hongming was invested with a third-rank principedom by "imperial grace" in 1735 and had a modest court career. In 1739 he was appointed to manage affairs at the Court of Imperial Armaments and in June 1740 was appointed lieutenant-general of the Bordered Red Mongol Banner. He was released from duties at the Court of Imperial Armaments in 1746 and as lieutenant-general in 1752. He died on February 4, 1767, and was granted the death name Gong Qin (Reverent and diligent).

Sources: ECCP, 931, 962; AJZP, 938; ZWGS 6.29.

The Chinese- and Manchu-language labels on the portrait of Hongming state that the painting was commissioned by his filial son, Yongzhong, in May 1767 (*dinghai* year, fourth month, nineteenth day). Yongzhong was the eldest surviving son at the time of Hongming's death but did not inherit Hongming's fourth-rank princely title. That went to his younger brother, Yongshi (1736–1808). Yongzhong himself was born on July 1, 1735, to Hongming's concubine Wang. In 1757 he was invested as a tenth-rank imperial noble and in 1770 was appointed to superintend the Imperial Lineage School. He was released from these duties in 1775–76 and does not seem to have held any other posts before his death on June 18, 1793. Yongzhong was also a well-known Qing poet.

Source: ECCP, 962.

Hongming's wife, Lady Wanyan.

See figure 2.

Hongming had two wives, but neither was the natural mother of his five sons. That was not seen as a problem in Qing society, since the wife was considered the putative mother, regardless of which concubine had actually borne the child. Although there is no inscription on this portrait, it is highly likely, in keeping with custom, that the subject is Hongming's first wife. She was born into the Wanyan,

a Manchu clan, and was the daughter of Provincial Administration Commissioner Luo Yantai.

Source: AJZP, 938.

The Manchu and Chinese labels, dated May 16, 1767, state that the painting is a portrait of Lady Wanyan, wife of the third-ranking prince; the labels are signed by the filial son, Yongzhong.

Hongtaiji. See Taizong.

Hongyan, Prince Guo (1733–1765).

See figure 5.4.

Hongyan was the son of the Yongzheng emperor (reigned 1723–35) and Lady Liu (see her biography below). When Yinli (see his biography below), the previous holder of the title, died in 1738, his half-brother the Qianlong emperor conferred on Hongyan the choice principedom of Prince Guo. In 1763, Hongyan was charged with greed and imprudent conduct and was demoted to a third-rank princely title. Before his death, however, Hongyan was reinstated in the second rank.

Source: ECCP, 919.

Jalafengge. See figure 5.11.

The son of Xilabu and a member of the Manchu Niohuru clan who served as deputy lieutenant-general of a banner, Jalafengge was betrothed to the Daoguang emperor's eighth daughter, Princess Shouxu, in 1855. The couple was married in 1863. The princess died less than three years later, in September 1866.

Source: DQYD.

Lirongbao, Duke. See figure 6.8.

Lirongbao, a member of the prominent Manchu Fuca clan, was the least successful of four brothers, all of whom attained high office. His ancestors had first joined the Manchu cause during the lifetime of Nurgaci and were hereditary captains of a company in the Bordered Yellow Banner. Lirongbao's father, Mishan, was a high official during the Kangxi reign. The hereditary rank of baron held by Mishan passed to Lirongbao (1675), whose own career was capped by appointment to the post of Chahar supervisor-in-chief (*zongguan*). Although none of the several biographies provide his birth and death dates, it is apparent that he died before 1717, when his first-rank baronetcy was passed on to his brother Maci. When his daughter became the empress of the Qianlong emperor (1737), Lirongbao's

noble title was posthumously raised to that of a first-class duke. After Lirongbao's son Fuheng won merit in the Jinchuan campaign, the family was ordered to erect an ancestor shrine (1749), and Lirongbao was awarded the death name Zhuangjue (Correct and upright).

Sources: ECCP, 581; QSG 268: 9977; BQTZ 81.1612.

Lirongbao's wife. See figure 6.7.

The subject of this portrait has been identified as the mother of Xiaoxian Huanghou, the first empress of the Qianlong emperor.

Li Yinzu (1629–1664).

See figure 6.9.

Li Yinzu was born into a prominent northeastern family of Korean origin. His ancestor Li Chengliang (1526–1618) was a Ming general who successfully repelled Nurgaci's forces in the 1570s and 1580s. Li Yinzu's father, Sizhong (1595–1657), entered Manchu service after he was captured (1619). Sizhong was incorporated into the Chinese (Hanjun) Plain Yellow Banner and was rewarded by being made a baron (1631). As the second son of Sizhong, Yinzu served the Qing as governor-general of the provinces of Zhili, Henan, and Shandong (1654–58), as well as Hubei and Hunan (1658–60).

Source: ECCP, 451.

Liu, Lady. See figure 4.2 for a portrait traditionally alleged to be of her but which probably is a generic beauty. Despite her name, Lady Liu, consort of the Yongzheng emperor and the mother of Hongyan, was not what the Qing dynasty would have called a Han Chinese. She was born into a bondservant family. Her father, Liu Man, was a *guanling*, or "chief clerk," who probably served in one of the households of imperial kinsmen. Lady Liu probably entered the palace through the palace maidservant draft (*gongnü*). Her initial status when she entered the palace was sixth-ranking consort (*guiren*). In 1734, after giving birth to the emperor's sixth son the previous year, she was promoted and given the name Qian *pin*. The next ruler promoted her to the fourth rank (*fei*). She died on June 7, 1767.

Source: TBZ, 2.18b.

Oboi (died 1669).
See figure 4.3.
Born into the Manchu Solgo Gūwalgiya clan, Oboi won many rewards and promotions during the Qing conquest. Trusted by Dorgon, he was one of those who helped the Shunzhi emperor rid himself of Dorgon's faction in 1651. The emperor made Oboi first a marquis and then a duke (1652) and junior tutor (1656). Oboi became one of the four banner officials named as regents for the young Kangxi emperor in 1661. Quickly achieving the status of *primus inter pares*, Oboi ruled "virtually supreme" during the emperor's minority. In 1669, however, Oboi was arrested for "insolence" and died in prison. His dukedom was abolished and his descendants were rendered commoners until his posthumous rehabilitation in 1713. Oboi's dukedom was eventually passed to a grandson, Dafu, who distinguished himself in the campaign against the Zunghars, dying on the battlefield. Despite this, the dukedom was reduced to a barony in 1780.
Source: ECCP, 599–600.

Shang Kexi (died 1676).
See figure 5.9.
One of the three Ming officers who joined the Manchus (in 1633), Shang Kexi was rewarded with high titles for his military exploits during the conquest, culminating in 1649 with the title "Prince who pacifies the south," and with control over Guangdong Province. During the rebellion of the Three Feudatories (1671–83), Shang turned against his son and successor Shang Zhixin, who joined the rebel forces. Shang Kexi died while under house arrest imposed by his son. After the rebels were suppressed, Shang Kexi was honored for his loyalty to the throne.
Source: ECCP, 635–36.

Taizong (1592–1643). See figure 5.1.
Taizong is not a personal name but rather what the Chinese call a "temple name," a posthumous designation for a ruler, usually the second in a dynastic line. The subject of this portrait is the second ruler of the Jurchen/Manchu imperial line, whom some scholars identify as Abahai. Recent scholarship has rejected this identification of his name but confirmed his centrality to the fortunes of his house. His personal name is not known. Contemporary Manchu-language records called him the

"fourth prince" (*duici beile*); modern scholars often refer to him as Hongtaiji. Hongtaiji's role in the creation of the Manchu dynasty is unquestioned. Historical documents from his lifetime attest to his major achievements. When Nurgaci died in 1626, Hongtaiji was one of the four senior banner princes in a group of eight kinsmen whom Nurgaci had appointed to rule collegially. In the early 1630s Hongtaiji bested his princely rivals and achieved the undisputed status of *primus inter pares*.

His was a very active life. He completed the process of unifying the northeast Asian tribes that had been begun by his father, Nurgaci. In 1636 Hongtaiji renamed his subjects, giving them a new identity as Manchus. The written language, invented during his father's reign, was revised and became the language of record for the burgeoning Qing bureaucracy. His descent group, the Aisin Gioro, was given a mythic origin in keeping with his grandiose political ambitions. While campaigning against the Ming dynasty, Hongtaiji courted Ming commanders and officials to persuade them to switch loyalties. He also consolidated alliances with neighboring Mongol tribes, incorporating them into the banners, the socio-military organization that eventually encompassed all who joined the Manchu cause before 1644.

It was Hongtaiji who in 1636 adopted the Chinese political vocabulary by declaring himself emperor of the Qing dynasty. Before his death, Hongtaiji achieved victory over Ming forces in the northeast and forced the Choson dynasty ruling Korea to recognize the Qing as suzerain. The simultaneous development of a Manchu state and strengthening of the Qing forces, achieved during Hongtaiji's rule, were crucial to the later success of his descendants.

Sources: ECCP, 1–3; Giovanni Stary, "The Manchu Emperor 'Abahai': Analysis of an Historiographic Mistake," *Central Asiatic Journal* 28, nos. 3–4 (1984): 296–99; Sun Wenliang and Li Zhiting, *Tiancong Han, Chongde di* (The Tiancong khan and Chongde emperor). Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1993.

Uksiltu.
See figure 2.12.
As noted in chapter 2, this portrait of Uksiltu was commissioned by the Qianlong emperor to commemorate the conquest of Turkestan and the Tarim Basin. We have no biographical informa-

tion beyond the bilingual inscription, signed by Liu Tongxun, Liu Lun, and Yu Minzhong, concerning the warrior Uksiltu. Service in the imperial guard would normally entail residence in the capital, Peking, and was a common initial appointment for bannermen. Because their work occasionally brought individuals to the emperor's attention, imperial guards sometimes climbed to high office.

The Manchu-language inscription reads: Imperial guard of the third rank, "cat hero" Uksiltu [was] chosen for the battle-front. One after another, the reports he went to the trouble to send continued to arrive: "Myriad of bandits remained surrounding the army's camp. They behaved as though there was no outstanding man there." By the time he reached Aksu, the calluses were almost up to his knees. The bullet that went into his back is still there today. Qianlong white-dragon year [1760]

Translated by Mark Elliott.
(The Chinese-language text is similar to the Manchu-language inscription and is thus not replicated here.)

Yang Hong (1381–1451). See figure 3.13.
A military figure of the Ming dynasty, Yang Hong won honors defending the frontier northwest of the capital. As commander of the Xuanfu garrison along the Great Wall, he came to the attention of the emperor, who invested him as earl (*bo*) of Changping (1449), a title later raised to marquis (*hou*). In 1450 Yang Hong helped defend the capital, an action that may have brought him to the attention of Yu Qian (1398–1457), who emerged from the crisis at court following the Oirat Mongol capture of the Zhengtong emperor (1449) as "the strongest man within the government." Yang Hong returned to Xuanfu in 1451 and died later that year. He was posthumously made duke (*gong*) of Yingguo and was granted the posthumous name Wuxiang. The inscription on his portrait (translated below) is by Yu Qian and dated 1451. Several years later, in 1457, Yu Qian himself was executed for treason but was posthumously rehabilitated (1466). In 1489 an imperial edict permitted the erection of a memorial shrine at Yu Qian's grave. Another shrine was built in the eastern part of Peking. During the Qing dynasty, scholars from Yu Qian's home province of Zhejiang coming to sit for the metropolitan examinations

would spend the night at the shrine, hoping that Yu's spirit would appear in their dreams to presage success in the examination.

The first inscription, which appears at the top of the painting, is an encomium by Yu Qian:

Full of spirit and brimming with energy, imposing in appearance and bold in speech; like the rivers and lakes were his natural capacities, of iron and stone were his liver and bowels. His mind probed stratagems and tactics that neither demons nor gods could fathom; he wielded his sword and halberd like the sparkling rays of the stars. He smashed the enemy vanguard for ten-thousand leagues, exploding like thunder, swift as lightning; he issued commands to the three armies through the blazing sun and the autumn frost. He had success at the imperial court and awed the borderlands into submission: when he galloped alone at the fore, ten-thousand foes could not withstand him; wherever he directed his battle standard, like dogs and sheep they ran away and hid. Those who knew his inner workings considered him a [great military strategist like] Sun Bin, Wu Qi, Guan Zhong, and Yue Yi; those who knew his outward actions considered him a [valiant commander like] Wei Qing, Huo Qubing, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei. Good fortune and longevity are blessings bestowed by Heaven; they are dukes and marquises, his sons and grandsons, numerous and abundant. Oh, such a man was he! One of whom it may be said, his meritorious service crowned the age, and the fragrance of his fame will flow onward [forever].

In the second year of the Jingtai reign, during winter, last decade of the tenth lunar month [November 14–22, 1451], encomium [composed by] the Metropolitan Graduate, Grand Master for Glorious Happiness, Junior Guardian, and concurrent Minister of War, Yu Qian of Xiping.

A second inscription appears on the portrait below the first. It is dated 1558 and signed by Xu Yongzhong, a metropolitan degree-winner of 1544 who was at that time an assistant surveillance commissioner.

Sources: *Ming shi* 173:1a–7a, with thanks to Stephen D. Allee for research notes; Yu Qian's biography is in *DMB*, 1608–11.

Yinghe (1771–1839).

See figure 6.1.

The inscription at the top of his portrait (see fig. 6.1 for a translation of the text) states that the subject was born on May 27, 1771. This birthdate is confirmed by other sources for Yinghe, a Manchu who attained high office under the Jiaqing emperor.

A member of the Socolo clan, Yinghe had direct ancestors who were bondservants that had attained degrees and responsible positions in the Imperial Household Department, the vast bureaucracy that managed the emperor's private estate and personal affairs. Yinghe's great-grandfather Dutu was a department director in the Imperial Household Department during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722). His father, Debao (1719–1789) had attained a *jinshi* degree in 1737 and was serving as governor of Guangdong Province when Yinghe was born. Yinghe himself was a *jinshi* of 1793. He served in the prestigious Hanlin Academy and attained promotions from 1799 onward. When his portrait was painted (1806), Yinghe had been promoted to the vice-presidency of the Board of Works and was concomitantly named a minister of the Imperial Household Department.

Yinghe was to experience several cycles of demotion and reinstatement. He served as one of the Jiaqing secretaries while in favor, was appointed president to several ministries, and also held posts as provincial examiner, grand secretary, and Hanlin academician. But he was also punished by exile to Heilongjiang for the failed construction of the Jiaqing emperor's tomb (he was one of the men in charge). Pardoned in 1831, Yinghe was allowed to return to the capital, where he lived until his death in 1839. He was posthumously granted the third official rank. Yinghe's family attained the rare distinction of placing six members in the Hanlin Academy over four generations. Source: ECCP, 931–33.

The inscription above the portrait is written by Yinghe. A translation of the text appears at the beginning of chapter 6.

Yinli, Prince Guo (1697–1738).

See figure 2.13.

The seventeenth son of the Kangxi emperor, Yinli enjoyed the favor of his half-brother, who as the Yongzheng emperor made Yinli a first-rank prince

shortly after ascending the throne in 1723. That same year, Yinli was appointed to work at the Lifanyuan (Imperial colonial office). In 1728 he was promoted on his merit from a second- to a first-degree principedom. Yinli filled a succession of offices under his brother. He worked in the Ministry of Public Works (1729), supervised the Ministry of Revenue's three storehouses (1730), and managed the affairs of the Ministry of Revenue for a brief period (1733). From 1733 to 1735 he served as Controller of the Imperial Clan Court. In 1734 Yinli escorted the Dalai Lama for a considerable part of his return journey to Lhasa.

After he returned to the capital, Yinli was put in charge of Miao and Qiang affairs in the southwest. Yinli fell into disfavor and was punished in 1735, but when the Yongzheng emperor died, he was one of the four persons appointed to a council to assist the new ruler during the mourning period. Yinli served in a variety of offices until 1736, when he was relieved of all duties because of illness. He seems to have still been in the Qianlong emperor's good graces when he died in March 1738. Upon his death, his title was given to the emperor's sixth son, Hongyan (see biography of Hongyan, above).

Yinli was a well-known devotee and scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, who appears in biographies of the second and third ICang skya khutukhtus for his sponsorship of lamas belonging to orders competing with the dGe lugs pa (Gelugpa) sect. One of his three religious names indicates that he was a follower of the rNying ma pa teachings. He sponsored the production of many Tibetan Buddhist works and was himself an author of several texts.

Sources: ECCP, 331; Vladimir L. Uspensky, *Prince Yunli (1697–1738): Manchu Statesman and Tibetan Buddhist* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1997).

The inscription that appears above the portrait is a poem written by Yinli; it bears his seal and is dated May 21, 1731. A translation of the poem appears in chapter 6.

Yinti, Prince Xun (1688–1755)

See figures 2.3, 2.14.

The fourteenth son of Xuanye, the Kangxi emperor, Yinti was a full brother to Yinzhen, who succeeded to the throne as the Yongzheng emperor. In the heated

succession struggle in 1712 that followed the removal of the Kangxi emperor's heir apparent, however, Yinti sided against his full brother, joining the faction of Yintang and Yinsi. Yinti was sent in 1718 by the Kangxi emperor as commander-in-chief of the campaign to push the Zunghars out of Tibet. He was away from the capital when the Kangxi emperor died in December 1722 and the Yongzheng emperor ascended the throne. Failing to conceal his resentment (Yinti had expected to be named his father's successor), Yinti was demoted in rank and became implicated in a plot against the new emperor in 1726. He was stripped of his ranks and confined to the Shouhuangdian, where he remained until released in 1735 by his nephew the Qianlong emperor, who restored Yinti to the princely ranks. By the time of his death he again held a second-degree principedom.

Sources: ECCP, 930–31; AIZP, 895; ZWGS 6.29.

The inscription, which appears above the portrait in figure 2.14, is a poem:

That one's form and features are
endowed by Heaven,
Has been known to all from past to
present;
Body, limbs, hair, and skin, come from
one's parents,
So one dare not but treat them with
respect.
His virtue conforms to the carpenter's
square,
And his pitchpipe is tuned to the primal
note;
He appears altogether like a man of the
Way,
Unashamed of his lonely shadow and
quilt.
Thus, he is not eminent, nor is he
reclusive,
He is not shallow, nor is he profound;
When juniors behold the pure tranquility
of his spirit,
They say he is a paragon like jade, a
paragon like gold,
But do not know he silently
communicates with Heaven
That his breast is filled with
commiseration for others.
The poem is unsigned and undated.
There is no seal.

Yinti's wife.

See figure 2.3.

Because there is no inscription, the identity of the woman who sits beside Yinti cannot be determined. It is most likely

Yinti's wife, who bore two of his four sons (see biography of Hongming, above). She was born into the Wanyan clan; her father, Luocha, attained the rank of vice-minister of a central government ministry. Ritually and legally, Madame Wanyan would have been the “mother” of all of Yinti's children, even those born to his concubines. Yinti had four concubines. The highest in rank (*ze fujin*) was a Shushu Gioro, daughter of Bureau Vice-Director Mingde, who was the mother of Yinti's eldest son. Below her in rank was an ordinary consort (*shu fujin*) from the Irgen Gioro clan, daughter of Xitai, who probably served as “Manager of Ceremonies” in a princely household. She was the mother of Yinti's third son. Another Irgen Gioro, daughter of Shibao (a second-class imperial commandant of the guards of a princely establishment), and a woman surnamed Wu, daughter of Changyou, were low-ranking concubines.

Source: AIZP, 895, 896, 938, 984, 993.

Yinxiang, the first Prince Yi (1686–1730).

See figures 2.15, 4.5.

Yinxiang, the thirteenth son of the Kangxi emperor, received a first-degree principedom in 1723 from his half-brother, Yinzhen, the Yongzheng emperor and an additional hereditary second-degree principedom in 1725. After Yinxiang died, the Yongzheng emperor allowed Yinxiang's name to be written using the same first character, *yi*n, as his own. This shared character in the names of an emperor's sons was normally replaced by another when a new emperor ascended the throne. Yinzhen's unusual action exemplified the high imperial favor and close fraternal affection enjoyed by Yinxiang.

During the 1720s, Yinxiang served in a variety of important posts. He was in charge of the three warehouses of the Ministry of Revenue (1722) and supervised the ministry's affairs (1723–25); he managed water control matters in the area around the capital (1726), and was one of the first to serve on the Grand Council (1729). After he died, his tablet was installed in the Temple to Virtuous Officials (Xianliang ci). The Qianlong emperor granted Yinxiang's descendants the right of perpetual inheritance to Yinxiang's first-degree principedom in 1775. Sources: ECCP, 923–24; AIZP, 837–38.

Yu Chenglong (1617–1684).

See figure 4.13.

A native of Shanxi, Yu Chenglong began his official career in his forties as a district magistrate in the southwest province of Guangxi. Success in what was considered to be a very difficult post led to promotion and other assignments in local government. His actions in 1674 to suppress the antigovernment uprising known as the Sanfan Rebellion (Rebellion of the Three Feudatories) in his prefecture led to further rewards and higher office. During his term as governor of Zhili, the province surrounding the capital, he was praised by the Kangxi emperor for his honesty. Long after Yu Chenglong's death, his tablet was installed in the Shrine to Virtuous Officials in 1733. As the inscription on his portrait records, this honor was granted in recognition of the meritorious service of Yu Jun (died 1731), Yu Chenglong's grandson, whose bureaucratic service included appointment to governorships of Guizhou and Jiangsu provinces. The installation of his tablet in the Temple of Virtuous Officials ensured that, unlike ordinary men who would be worshiped after their deaths only by their descendants, Yu Chenglong would receive regular sacrifices from the state; he was indeed halfway to becoming a deity. Sources: ECCP, 937, 940; *Da Qing huidian shili* (1896), *juan* 448.

The inscription above Yu's portrait reproduces the patent of promotion, posthumously awarded to him on April 22, 1706:

Entrusted by Heaven with Care of the Empire, the August Emperor commands:

When We confer ranks upon the nine grades [of officials], We first review the worthy service of their rank and tenure, and if three [consecutive] generations have received Our imperial favor, We forthwith make known the benevolent [legacy] that [the grandfather] bequeathed to his posterity, and specially proclaim the great model [he set] in order to enlarge his excellent reputation. You, Yu Chenglong, who formerly served as Governor General for Military Affairs in the provinces of Jiangnan and Jiangxi and other locales, as well as River

Controller in charge of grain provisions, Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent, Minister of War, and concurrently Right Vice–Censor-in-chief in the Censorate, were the grandfather of Yu Jun, Governor and Military Superintendent of Guizhou Province and other locales, in charge of military provisions for Hubei and Eastern Sichuan, and Right Vice–censor-in-chief in the Censorate with five promotions in grade. Pure in heart, you embraced simplicity; of kindly demeanor, you accumulated happiness. Planting your fragrant standard in the counties and districts, you were a scepter of jade that extended the virtue of your forebears. You lifted your tasseled pennon in the borderlands, and gave counsel to your descendants that served as a model to disseminate new plans. Therefore, inasmuch as your grandson [Yu Jun] has proved capable of assisting Us in public affairs, We bestow on you the title Grand Master for Splendid Happiness and confer it by means of this patent of promotion.

Wuhu! We confer this cloudy document of resplendence that your lofty gates may overflow with blessings. We pour forth the unbounded vastness of Our celestial benevolence that its radiance may flow to the numerous leaves of your tree [i.e., generations of your family]. Let the decree of Our favor be greatly received that your excellence may be proclaimed forever.

Eighth day at the beginning of the third lunar-month in the forty-fifth year of the Kangxi reign [April 20, 1706].

Zaidun (1827–1890), Seventh Prince Yi. See figure 4.7.

Zaidun was the second son of Yige (1805–1858), holder of a fourth-rank princely title, who had a long career from the 1820s onward in a succession of banner and imperial guard posts. As the first son of Yige's wife, Zaidun inherited Yige's title, reduced one grade in accordance with dynastic regulations (1858) and was appointed to various banner and guard posts from 1858 onward. In October 1864 the throne awarded him the first-degree principedom and he became the seventh Prince Yi. Through the rest of his life he continued to hold posts at court and in banner offices.

The identification of the portrait (see fig. 4.7) of the Seventh Prince Yi as Zaidun is thrown into question by the outside label on the painting. Zaidun was not posthumously enfeoffed as the label states. He was the seventh person to hold the title of Prince Yi during his lifetime. Four men were posthumously enfeoffed Prince Yi (they included a distant kinsman and Zaidun's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather), but none of them were in the seventh generation of the descent line, so they are ruled out as the subjects of this portrait. In the absence of further information, Zaidun is the most likely candidate.

Source: AJZP, 863–65.

Zaiyuan (1816–1861), Sixth Prince Yi. See figure 4.6.

The sixth prince Yi was the descendant of Hongxiao, the seventh son of Yinxiang. Zaiyuan had the confidence of the Daoguang (reigned 1821–50) and Xianfeng (reigned 1851–61) emperors and held a succession of banner and imperial lineage posts from the 1830s onward. Zaiyuan played an important role during the Arrow War (1856–60). In September 1860, while he and Muyin were negotiating with the British at Tianjin, he ordered the arrest of the representative of the British High Commissioner, Harry S. Parkes and his party, an act that brought retaliation from the allies. Zaiyuan went with the emperor to Chengde where he, Sushun, and several others were entrusted with great responsibilities. He was identified as one of the co-regents for the infant who would rule as the Tongzhi emperor (reigned 1862–74) but was brought down by the coup d'état of empresses dowager Ci'an and Cixi. Zaiyuan was ordered to commit suicide. The princely title was awarded to a different branch of the family, descended from Yinxiang's fourth son, Hongjiao. Zaidun, the recipient, was made Prince Yi by imperial edict in October 1864.

Sources: AJZP, 880–83; ZWGS, *juan* 6.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS FOR SOURCES

AJZP. *Aixin jue Luo zongpu* (Genealogy of the Aisin Gioro). Edited by Jin Songqiao et al. 8 vols. Fengtian: n.p., 1937–38.

BMST. *Baqi Manzhou shizu tongpu* (Collected genealogies of the eight banner Manchu clans). Ed. Hongzhou, Ortai et al. 1744. Reprint, Shenyang Liao Shen shushe, 1989.

BQTZ. (*Qinding*) *Baqi tongzhi* (Imperially commissioned general history of the eight banners). Ed. Ortai et al. 8 vols. 1739. Reprint, Changchun: Dongbei shifan-daxue chubanshe, 1986.

BQTZXB. (*Qinding*) *Baqi tongzhi xubian* (Imperially commissioned sequel to the general history of the eight banners). Ed. Tiebao et al. 60 vols. 1799. Reprint, Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1968.

DMB. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds. *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*. 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

DQYD. *Da Qing yudie* (Qing imperial genealogy). Ms. periodically revised throughout the dynasty. This imperial genealogy is held in the Shenyang Palace Museum and the First Historical Archives, Beijing. A microfilm copy in Chinese with some portions in Manchu is held by the Utah Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City.

ECCP. Arthur W. Hummel, ed. *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943–44.

QSG. Zhao Erxun et al. *Qingshi gao* (Draft history of the Qing). 48 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977.

TBZ. Tang Bangzhi. *Qing huangshi sipu* (Four genealogies of the Qing imperial family). vol. 71 of *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* (Collected reprints of modern Chinese historical materials), ed. Shen Yunlong. Taipei: Wenhai, 1967.

uksn i wang gung sai gungge fa'shan be ietulere ulabun (Biographies of meritorious princes in the imperial lineage). 7 *juan*. Ms. Harvard-Yenching Treasure Room.

ZWGS. *Zongshi wang gong shizhi zhangjing juezhi xici quanbiao* (Charts of hereditary noble titles for imperial main-line princes and nobles). Edited by Mou Qiwen. 10 *juan*. Ms. Preface dated 1907 (GX 32/12).

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(*Qinding*) *Baqi tongzhi* (Imperially commissioned general history of the eight banners). Edited by Ortai et al. 8 vols. 1739. Reprint, Changchun: Dongbei shifandaxue chubanshe, 1986.

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Glossary of Chinese Characters

The following list includes selected Chinese terms and titles of books that are discussed in the text, names of the subjects in the Sackler's portraits, and some names of other less well-known persons and places. Personal names and titles are romanized according to either Manchu pronunciation or the pinyin system for Chinese.

Readers who are literate in Chinese may wonder why the personal names of sons of the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), which begin with the character *yin* (literally meaning successor, heir) are written in the glossary using the character *yun* (meaning to consent, grant). The reason for the change goes back to the Yongzheng reign (1723–35), when the new emperor adopted the Chinese regulation prohibiting others from using the characters in his personal name. Only Yinxiang, Prince Yi, was posthumously exempted from the rule. The Yongzheng precedent was not followed in later reigns. For a fuller explanation, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 110–12.

北裕口	Beiyukou
博果鐸, 莊親王	Boggodo, Prince Zhuang
綵帨	caishui (silk streamer)
常服	changfu (ordinary court dress)
常在	changzai (seventh-rank imperial consort)
朝服	chaofu (first-rank, or formal, court dress)
朝褂	chaogua (woman's court vest)
承澤	Chengze (princely title of father of Boggodo)
重裱	chong biao (remounted scroll)
重追影	chong zhuiying (repainted posthumous portrait)
傳神寫照	chuanshen xiezhao (transmitting the spirit through the depiction of outward appearance)
淳穎, 睿親王	Chunying, Prince Rui
慈禧	Cixi, Empress Dowager
代善, 禮親王	Daišan, Prince Li
道	Dao (the Way)
大壽像	dashou xiang (portrait of great longevity)
大行	daxing ("the great transit," term applied to emperors and empresses between death and burial)

大應	<i>daying</i> (seventh-rank imperial consort)
丁蘭	Ding Lan (one of the paragons of filial piety)
頂相	<i>dingxiang</i> (portrait of a Buddhist abbot)
地壇	Ditan (Altar of earth)
洞耳村	Dongercun (in Pucheng County, Shaanxi Province)
多爾博	Dorbo (Dorgon's heir)
妃	<i>fei</i> (third-rank imperial consort)
豐泰	Fengtai (a photography studio)
奉先殿	Fengxiandian (Hall of the ancestors)
福臨	Fulin, the Shunzhi emperor
福全	Fuquan (son of the Shunzhi emperor)
高宗純皇帝	Gaozong, Chun huangdi
恭	Gong (Reverent), a posthumous name for Chunying
宮女	<i>gongnü</i> (imperial maidservant)
關夫人	Guan, Lady
管領	<i>guanling</i> (chief clerk)
廣祿, 裕親王	Guanglu, Prince Yu
廣寧, 裕親王	Guangning, Prince Yu
廣勝寺	Guangsheng si (Guangsheng temple)
掛軸題簽	<i>guazhou tiqian</i> (title slip on outside of a scroll)
貴妃	<i>guifei</i> (second-rank imperial consort)
貴人	<i>guiren</i> (fifth-rank imperial consort)
號	<i>hao</i> (literary or studio name)
盒	<i>he</i> (box; homonym with peace, see below)
和	<i>he</i> (peace)
紅給絨頂帽	<i>hong jirong dingmao</i> (hat with red knotted button)
弘春	Hongchun, son of Yinti (Prince Xun)
弘皎	Hongjiao, son of Yinxiang (Prince Yi)
弘歷	Hongli, the Qianlong emperor
紅樓夢	<i>Hongloumeng</i> (title of a novel)
弘明, 恭勤	Hongming, Gong Qin
弘曉	Hongxiao, seventh son of Yinxiang (Prince Yi)
弘瞻	Hongyan, Prince Guo
笏	<i>hu</i> (plaque)
黃花梨	<i>huanghuali</i> (rosewood)
皇上	<i>huangshang</i> (great emperor)
皇貴妃	<i>huangguifei</i> (first-rank imperial consort)
會館	<i>huiguan</i> (native-place association)

慧賢皇貴妃	Huixian <i>huangguifei</i>
扎拉豐阿	Jalafengge
雞	<i>ji</i> (rooster; homonym with auspicious, see below)
吉	<i>ji</i> (auspicious)
家禮	<i>Jia li</i> (Rituals for family life)
家廟	<i>jiamiao</i> (family ancestor temple)
揭帛	<i>jiebo</i> (lifting the shroud)
吉服	<i>jifu</i> (semiformal court attire)
景靈宮	Jingling Palace (Song palace)
金黃	<i>jinhuang</i> (golden yellow)
孔有德	Kong Youde
賴阿芳	Lai Afong (Cantonese photographer)
藍	<i>lan</i> (blue)
蘭	Lan (Orchid; a name referring to Empress Dowager Cixi)
老佛爺	Lao Foye (Old Buddha; a name referring to Empress Dowager Cixi)
老祖宗	Lao Zuzong (Venerable Ancestor; a name referring to Empress Dowager Cixi)
禮	<i>li</i> (ritual)
李成梁	Li Chengliang
李思忠	Li Sizhong
李蔭祖	Li Yinzu
梁時泰	Liang Shitai
歷代帝王廟	Lidai di wang miao (Temple to rulers of successive dynasties)
禮服	<i>lifu</i> (emperor's first-rank court dress)
李榮保, 承恩公	Lirongbao, Duke Cheng En
劉氏	Liu, Lady
劉綸	Liu Lun
劉滿	Liu Man
劉統勛	Liu Tongxun
劉墉	Liu Yong
侍郎羅察	Luocha, Vice Minister
布政使羅延泰	Luo Yantai, Provincial Administration Commissioner
買太公	<i>maitaigong</i> (purchased visage)
綿標	Mianbiao
名旌/ 銘旌	<i>mingjing</i> (name banner)
名	<i>ming</i> (personal name)
明德	Mingde, Bureau Vice-director

明黃	<i>minghuang</i> (bright yellow)
旻寧	Minning, the Daoguang emperor
牟其汶	Mou Qiwen
穆佳	Mujia
南薰殿	Nanxundian
鼇拜	Oboi
配	<i>pei</i> (ancillary sacrifice)
偏旁	<i>pianpang</i> (characters in personal names denoting shared kniship)
披領	<i>piling</i> (wide collar or capelet on court dress)
嬪	<i>pin</i> (fourth-rank imperial consort)
溥儀	Puyi, the Xuantong emperor
契王氏秘傳知人風鑑 原理相法全書	<i>Qi Wang shi michuan zhiren fengjian yuanli xiangfa quanshu</i> (Wang's secrets about understanding man's character through the principles of physiognomy)
謙嬪	<i>Qian pin</i>
麒麟	<i>qilin</i> (unicornlike mythical animal)
琴	<i>qin</i> (zither)
磬	<i>qing</i> (chime, homonym with felicity, see below)
慶	<i>qing</i> (felicity)
求真	"Qiu Zhen" (essay, "Seeking the real")
顴	<i>quan</i> (cheekbone, homonym with power, see below)
權	<i>quan</i> (power)
任景豐	Ren Jingfeng
銳鋒	Ruifeng
尚可喜	Shang Kexi
尚之信	Shang Zhixin
社稷壇	Shejitan (Altar of land and grain)
聖容	<i>shengrong</i> (imperial ancestor portrait)
神畫	<i>shen hua</i> (portrait of the deceased; literally, painting of the spirit)
神武門	Shenwu Gate
神御	<i>shenyu</i> (imperial ancestor portrait)
申字	<i>shenzi</i> (one of ten standard types of faces)
謚, 謚號	<i>shi, shi hao</i> (posthumous or death name)
石青	<i>shiqing</i> (blue-black)
詩堂	<i>shitang</i> (blank space above a painting; literally, poetry hall)
石文英	Shi Wenying
石保	Shibao

壽恩固倫公主	Shou'en, Princess
壽皇殿	Shouhuangdian (palace hall)
壽禧和碩公主	Shouxi, Princess
壽臧和碩公主	Shouzang, Princess
庶福晉	<i>shu fujin</i> (ordinary or lower-ranking consort of a prince)
塑像	<i>suxiang</i> (sculpture)
太常司	Taichangsi (Department of sacrificial worship)
太廟	Taimiao (Temple of the ancestors)
太禧宗禋院	Taixi zongyin yuan (Office of imperial ancestor worship)
太宗	Taizong (Hongtaiji)
天壇	Tiantan (Altar of heaven)
天章閣	Tianzhangge (Song imperial pavilion)
鐵保	Tiebao
鐵帽子王	<i>tiemaozi wang</i> ("iron-capped princes")
剔犀	<i>tixi</i> (sword-pommel-scroll design carved lacquer)
同文館	Tongwenguan (foreign-language school)
圖畫見聞誌	<i>Tuhua jianwen zhi</i> (An account of my experiences in painting)
脫影奇觀	<i>Tuoying qiguan</i> (book about photography; literally, Wonderful sights of cast-off shadows)
外朝	<i>waichao</i> (public or outer court)
完顏	Wanyan (clan name)
完顏氏	Wanyan, Lady
吳氏	Wu, Ms.
吳常有	Wu Changyou
吳賴熙	Wu Lai-hsi
武襄	Wuxiang (posthumous name)
武壯王祠	Wuzhuang Wang ci (Shrine dedicated to Kong Youde)
禧	<i>xi</i> (happiness)
賢良祠	Xianliang ci (Shrine to virtuous officials)
相看	<i>xiangkan</i> (physiognomy)
香色	<i>xiangse</i> (tawny yellow)
相術	<i>xiangshu</i> (physiognomy)
孝恭	Xiaogong, Empress
孝欽顯皇后	Xiaoqin Xian huanghou (posthumous name of Empress Cixi)
孝賢皇后	Xiaoxian, Empress
肖像	<i>xiaoxiang</i> (portrait)

寫真傳神	<i>xiezhen chuanshen</i> (term for portraits)	雍和宮	Yonghegong (palace of the Yongzheng emperor converted to Tibetan Buddhist temple)
熙拉布	Xilabu	永碩	Yongshi
形	<i>xing</i> (likeness)	永理, 成親王	Yongxing, Prince Cheng
杏黃	<i>xinghuang</i> (apricot or orange-yellow)	顥琰	Yongyan, the Jiaqing emperor
行樂圖	<i>xingletu</i> (informal portraits)	永忠	Yongzhong
醒世姻緣傳	"Xing shi yin yuan zhuan" (essay, "Tale of a marriage to awaken the world")	于成龍	Yu Chenglong
洗盆	<i>xipen</i> (washbasin; homonym with <i>xi</i> , happiness)	于敏中	Yu Minzhong
禧神	<i>xi shen</i> (portrait of the deceased; literally, happy spirit)	于謙	Yu Qian
西泰, 典儀	Xitai, who was manager of ceremonies in a princely household	元寶山	Yuanbaoshan
西太后	Xi Taihou (Western Empress Dowager)	原廟	<i>yuan miao</i> (founder's shrine)
秀女	<i>xiunü</i> (imperial bride inspection)	圓明園	Yuanmingyuan (Qing imperial villa)
西王母	Xiwangmu	韻	<i>yun</i> (spirit harmony)
許用中	Xu Yongzhong	御容	<i>yurong</i> (imperial portrait)
勳齡	Xunling	載敦	Zaidun, the seventh Prince Yi
楊洪	Yang Hong	載坊	Zaifang, the fifth Prince Yi
養心殿	Yangxindian (Qing palace within the Forbidden City)	載泰	Zaitai
懿	Yi (virtuous)	載垣	Zaiyuan, the sixth Prince Yi
奕格	Yige	則福晉	<i>ze fujin</i> (secondary consort of a prince)
衣冠畫 / 像	<i>yiguan hua/xiang</i> (robe and cap portrait)	張濟民	Zhang Jimin
奕譞, 醇親王	Yihuan, Prince Chun	趙氏	Zhao, Ms.
允禩	Yin'e	兆惠	Zhaohui
英和	Yinghe	昭忠祠	Zhaozhong ci (Shrine to loyal officials)
影堂	<i>yingtang</i> (portrait hall)	朕	<i>zhen</i> (imperial "I")
影像	<i>yingxiang</i> (ancestor portrait)	珍妃	Zhen fei
允禮, 果親王	Yinli, Prince Guo	中外二百名人照相全冊	<i>Zhongwai erbai mingren zhaoxiang quance</i>
允礽	Yinreng	周壽昌	Zhou Shouchang
允禔	Yinsi	追影	<i>zhuiying</i> ("retrieving the shadow," term for posthumous ancestor portraits)
允禔, 恂郡王	Yinti, Prince Xun	字	<i>zi</i> (coming-of-age name given to men)
允禧	Yinxi	紫光閣	Ziguangge (Hall of imperial brilliance)
胤祥, 怡親王	Yinxiang, the first Prince Yi	紫禁城	Zijin Cheng (Forbidden City)
胤禛	Yinzhen, the Yongzheng emperor	宗室王宮世職章京 爵秩襲次全表	<i>Zongshi wanggong shizhi zhangjing juezhi xici quanbiao</i> (Charts of hereditary noble titles for imperial mainline princes and nobles)
允祉	Yinzhi	祖父之位	<i>zufu zhi wei</i> (grandfather's spirit tablet)
奕訢, 恭親王	Yixin, Prince Gong	祖先畫	<i>zuxian hua</i> (ancestor painting)
遺像	<i>yixiang</i> (posthumous portrait or portrait left behind for posterity)	祖宗畫	<i>zuzong hua</i> (ancestor painting)
奕勳	Yixun		

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recently restored to their original brilliance by the museum's conservators. This group of paintings was originally assembled in the late 1930s and 1940s by Richard G. Pritzlaff, a New Mexican rancher, who obtained the portraits from a Chinese dealer known for his connections with nobles selling their family heirlooms.

Worshipping the Ancestors appeals to connoisseurs of Chinese art and to all those interested in social history, portraiture, and devotional art.

JAN STUART, associate curator of Chinese art at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, has written on a wide range of modern and traditional Chinese arts, including painting, ceramics, and scholars' gardens. She is coauthor with Louise Allison Cort of *Joined Colors: Decoration and Meaning in Chinese Porcelain* (1993) and a contributor to *Worlds Within Worlds: The Richard Rosenblum Collection of Chinese Scholars' Rocks*, edited by Robert Mowry (1997).

EVELYN S. RAWSKI is University Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh. In addition to her monograph *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (1998), she has written extensively on a variety of social and cultural institutions in China.

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